





2021-06

# MILITARY THOUGHT AND DOCTRINE IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

# THESIS

**MILITARY THOUGHT AND DOCTRINE IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY**

by

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June 2021

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| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE | *Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188* |
|---|---|



| **1. AGENCY USE ONLY** *(Leave blank)* | **2. REPORT DATE** June 2021 | **3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED** Master's thesis |
|---|---|---|

**4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE**
MILITARY THOUGHT AND DOCTRINE IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

**5. FUNDING NUMBERS**

**6. AUTHOR(S)** Mathieu P. Amirault

**7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)**
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, CA 93943-5000

**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER**

**9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)**
N/A

**10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER**

**11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES** The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

**12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**
Approved for public release. Distribution is unlimited.

**12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**
A

**13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)**

The thesis examines the past and present ties between U.S. military thought as expressed in combat doctrine and the imagined and historical reality of war in Europe to examine how the use and abuse of military history within the genesis of U.S. military doctrine and thought has occurred. The thesis surveys the course of U.S. defense strategy as it has related to Europe, and specifically how it has engaged with the record of German military history, thought, and myth as channeled via the writings, interpretations, and misinterpretations of Carl von Clausewitz and the historical record of the Wehrmacht within the mirror of U.S. military doctrine in the 20th century. The thesis concludes that U.S. military thought and the history of war in Europe are connected via an international process of challenge and response wherein U.S. military planners have often looked to the record of European war to extract ready-made tactical and operational practices seemingly suited to solve pressing military challenges. The thesis also concludes that U.S. military thought has adopted various decontextualized concepts from Clausewitz's *On War* in a manner that obscures a more historic perspective toward the material that, in turn, better prepares the reader to engage with more polemical and flawed critiques of the Prussian and his work.

| **14. SUBJECT TERMS** Clausewitz, doctrine, military history, German General Staff, FM 100–5, military thought, Wehrmacht, strategy | **15. NUMBER OF PAGES** 111 |
|---|---|
| | **16. PRICE CODE** |

| **17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT** | **18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE** | **19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT** | **20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT** |
|---|---|---|---|
| Unclassified | Unclassified | Unclassified | UU |

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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# MILITARY THOUGHT AND DOCTRINE IN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES: PATTERNS OF INTERACTION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(EUROPE AND EURASIA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
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The thesis examines the past and present ties between U.S. military thought as expressed in combat doctrine and the imagined and historical reality of war in Europe to examine how the use and abuse of military history within the genesis of U.S. military doctrine and thought has occurred. The thesis surveys the course of U.S. defense strategy as it has related to Europe, and specifically how it has engaged with the record of German military history, thought, and myth as channeled via the writings, interpretations, and misinterpretations of Carl von Clausewitz and the historical record of the Wehrmacht within the mirror of U.S. military doctrine in the 20th century. The thesis concludes that U.S. military thought and the history of war in Europe are connected via an international process of challenge and response wherein U.S. military planners have often looked to the record of European war to extract ready-made tactical and operational practices seemingly suited to solve pressing military challenges. The thesis also concludes that U.S. military thought has adopted various decontextualized concepts from Clausewitz's *On War* in a manner that obscures a more historic perspective toward the material that, in turn, better prepares the reader to engage with more polemical and flawed critiques of the Prussian and his work.

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
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| COIN | Counterinsurgency |
| DA PAM | Department of the Army Pamphlet |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NSTL | National Strike Target List |
| OKH | Oberkommando des Heeres |
| OKW | Oberkommando der Wehrmacht |
| SAC | Strategic Air Command |
| SIOP | Single Integrated Operational Plan |
| TRADOC | U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command |

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my two thesis advisors, Professor Donald Abenheim and Dr. Carolyn Halladay. Thank you for patiently guiding and mentoring me through this challenging process and for providing me the opportunity to research the subjects I have been interested in for some time. The pandemic limited our contact, and I wish circumstances had allowed us to meet more in person. I will always be grateful for your support and trust along this journey. As Clausewitz wrote: "While history may yield no formula, it does provide an *exercise in judgment* here as everywhere else" and educates and prepares the soldier's mind to face the forces of war in their complexity. Having completed this work, I wish to thank the U.S. Marine Corps, the Naval Postgraduate School, my family, my friends, and my teachers for this chance to reflect on questions of central importance to my service as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps.

I would also like to thank those who have been closest to me for the past year. To my wife, Ashley—thank you for your love, understanding, and support. Thank you for being present and available for Max and for helping him understand why I was off "in the library with books" and working on this thesis. Thank you, also, for embracing the arrival of all sorts of old books, faded and out-of-print military manuals, U.S. Army trade journals, and all manner of "Clausewitzian" things. Thank you for listening to my thoughts about this project and for lifting my spirits during the tough times during this most unusual year, which also brought us the newest and littlest member of our family. I know I will treasure our time in Monterey, and I look forward to future adventures in Germany and beyond that we will share with Max and baby Bowen.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Since the 18th century, the profession of the soldier has grown in ambition and impact in government and society amid a constant preparation for war as well as, especially in the recent past, a constant assessment of what the past and present bode for the future. One can call this process military thought, and as such, those who engage in this effort should be especially aware of the historical, political, and cultural context of ideas about "how to fight" and the higher purposes of war and military organization. In the 21st century, this process is not as well studied as in former times, while, at the same time, there is more military thought being exercised than perhaps ever before. From the origins of more or less modern military thought and education in the 18th century—and present—U.S. military planners have looked to Europe to think about how to fight.[1] American appreciation of the tactical and operational success on land of German military planning in Europe and Eurasia during 1939–1941 drove U.S. interest in adopting German forms of combat as tactics and operations, despite the recent memory of how this doctrine served the illiberal politics of operationalized plunder and extermination under National Socialism. American military planners also looked to the history of European colonial warfare in order to generate doctrine applicable to the more recent wars in Southwest Asia.

[1] See Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973) 80–85 for the integration of translations of French military theory, to include de Vernon and Jomini, into the U.S. Military Academy curriculum in the 19th century; see also Brian Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 23 for the influence of the image of Napoleonic conflict on pre-Civil War U.S. strategists, 24–25 for the interest that U.S. Army engineers took in the role of fortifications during the Crimean War in 1854–1856, and 49–50 for U.S. Army officer Emory Upton's application of German military organizational tenets to U.S. Army organizational planning after the Civil War; see also John I. Alger, *The Quest for Victory* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1982) 51–55 for discussion on how translations of Jomini's military maxims filtered into the U.S. military discourse during and after the Civil War; see *Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12–2: Infantry in Battle* (2d ed. Washington, D.C.: Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps) as an example of how U.S. military thought looked to the tactical history of the First World War through the lens numerous small-unit tactical case studies rooted in the American and Allied experience on the Western Front; and Peter Paret, "Napoleon and the Revolution in War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 138–141 for how generations of Western soldiers looked to the historical example of Napoleon in order to glean some insight into the nature of war and battle.

A number of scholars have taken a critical approach towards the legacy of military history centered in historical narratives that laud German *Wehrmacht* tactical and operational acumen and European colonial warfighting and have categorized these accompanying narratives as *mythic* and also as *legend*.[2] This research strives to illuminate how U.S. military thought has considered the complex historical record of European war and how U.S. military thought has, at times, incorporated selective, biased, and mythical historical narratives and excluded historical facts. The key question of this research is:

*How has European military history, military thought and combat doctrine, and military myth shaped U.S. military thought and combat doctrine*?

This thesis considers *European military history*, that is, more or less the sum of strategic thought and operational practices since the 18th century to consist of the record of, as Michael Howard writes, those "complicated and disagreeable realities" that illuminate "what really happened."[3] Moreover, the general method of the thesis seeks to align with that put forth by Peter Paret: that the study of war should examine both the fighting itself and also the political, social, and cultural factors that "surround and penetrate war," such as the motives and action behind the battle, that hold "the key for a full understanding of the fighting."[4]

This thesis considers *military thought* to be the advanced study in the military and civil society that considers the nature of war itself, the character of strategy, and the process of military training and education which began in Europe and which, in the past half

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[2] See the following titles for the use of "myth" and "legend" descriptors as associated with critical military history: Douglas Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Ronald Smelser and Edward J. Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front: The Nazi-Soviet War in American Popular Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Gerhard P. Gross, *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare: Operational Thinking from Moltke the Elder to Heusinger*, Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2016; and Karl-Heinz Freiser, *The Blitzkrieg Legend*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005.

[3] Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," *The RUSI Journal*, 138:1, https://doi-org.libproxy.nps.edu/10.1080/03071849308445676, 27.

[4] Peter Paret, *Understanding War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 1. See also Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xi for how the extraction of the study of war from "the environment in which it was fought—social, cultural, political, economic—was to ignore dimensions essential to its understanding."

century, has developed into a global intellectual industry within which the U.S. military contributes an outsized role. In this enterprise one finds the intersection of war and politics, strategy, operations, tactics, as well as technology and battle, and the intersection and relevancy of military philosophy with consideration of "modern war." Brian Linn observes as such in *The Echo of Battle* (2002) and perceives that U.S. military thought consists of a plethora of different considerations:

> Even before GWOT, the defense community was in the midst of a vibrant debate over whether the nature of war itself had changed. Advocates offered the prospect of a glittering future…Others defended the relevance of military philosophers such as Henri Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz…The debate, like the defense community, overflowed with buzzwords – asymmetric conflict, fourth generation warfare, shock and awe, full spectrum dominance – many of which quickly became passe. And with some significant exceptions, much of this debate confined itself to hypothetical threats, to the relative merits of weapon systems, and to new tactical organizations.[5]

## A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

War in Europe has drawn the attention of U.S. military theorists and authors of doctrine that have in turn sought to interpret and extract theories and practice about the nature of war and how to prepare for war in its constant variety. U.S. Army officers sought strategic inspiration within the theorems of Jomini and the historical example of Napoleon in the early 19th century.[6] U.S. Army officers attempted to transplant the Prussian military organizational model to the United States after the Civil War because they perceived it to be an ideal system.[7] American planners charged with the defense of Europe after the Second World War immediately sought out the expertise of their former German enemies and submitted the capstone U.S. Army field manual, FM 100–5, to a select group of

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[5] Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The American Way of War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1–2.

[6] Weigley, *The American Way of War,* 82–83 for the influence of Jomini's military thought within military thought at the U.S. Military Academy in the 19th century; 87–88 for U.S. Army officer and West Point instructor Dennis Mahan's interest in Napoleonic strategy and warfare as displayed in 19th century U.S. military thought.

[7] Weigley, 82; see also Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, 23.

German generals for critical review.[8] The U.S. military turned to orient on land battle in Europe after Vietnam, adopted Clausewitz's *On War* as required reading within the professional military education system, and solicited German review of another revision of FM 100–5.[9] U.S. military thought has absorbed various German fighting concepts—for example, *Auftragstaktik* and *Schwerpunkt*—in order to generate the *maneuver warfare* doctrine and lend momentum to the use of mission-type orders within the U.S. military planning process.[10] Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, represented the synthesis of several strands of interpretation of European military history and purported to offer the general public and American political and academic elite a more intellectually credible response to the deteriorating security situation in post-war Iraq.[11] Since September 11th,

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[8] Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front,* 70.

[9] Linn, *The Echo of Battle,* 202–203; see also Christopher Bassford, "Clausewitz in America Today," in *Clausewitz Goes Global: Carl von Clausewitz in the 21st Century*, edited by Reiner Pommerin, (Berlin: Miles-Verlag, 2011), 342–343; and Paul H. Herbert, "Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100–5, Operations," *Leavenworth Papers*, no 16 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1988), https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16040coll3/id/32/, 62.

[10] Military thinkers have considered the tactical-operational achievements of German arms during the First World War as worthy of consideration and perhaps emulation. *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, July 1981), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/leavenworth-papers-4-the-dynamics-of-doctrine.pdf, examines German tactical innovation and the attempt to overcome the limitations of positional warfare. Bruce Gudmundsson's *Stormtroop Tactics* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1989, 2d ed released 1995) considers the same general topic, and was frequently referenced by my peers in the instructor cadre "bullpen" of the Marine Corps Basic School during 2013–2016. The Marine Corps moved to adopt "maneuver warfare" as a warfighting approach in the late 1980s, and looked to publications such as *The Maneuver Warfare Handbook* by William Lind (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1985) in order to inform the publication of Fleet Marine Force Manual 1: *Warfighting*, the precursor to Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1: *Warfighting* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1997, https://www.marines.mil/Portals/1/Publications/MCDP%201%20Warfighting.pdf). See page 3 for a direct cite of Clausewitz's "wrestler" analogy, 5 for discourse on the impact of friction in war and 13–15 for notes on the moral-physical nature of war. These directly align to Clausewitzian discourse detailed on 119–121 and 184 of Paret's translation of *On War*. See 45–47 for discussion of the importance of the "center of gravity" and associated adversary "critical vulnerability," and 78–91 for perspective on war command and tasking that aligns to German-influenced thought on decentralized tasking and shared understanding of leader intent.

[11] Gian Gentile, in *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counter-Insurgency*, contends that the release of FM 3-24 partially represented an attempt to shape public discourse surrounding the Iraq and Afghanistan wars towards the view that the wars could be fought successfully in a less destructive manner than past wars. See pages 1–12 and 24–25 for supporting details on the association of doctrine development, public discourse, and association of American intellectuals with FM 3-24.

2001, U.S. defense intellectuals have oriented toward *information operations and warfare* as an emerging realm of inquiry[12] in light of recent Russian malign activity within Europe and have developed and published Joint Publication 3-13, *Information Operations*, in addition to multiple service-level reference publications.[13]

Scholars have illuminated how such military historians as S.L.A. Marshall and Basil Liddell Hart approached the record of German arms in World War II in a selective fashion.[14] These scholars have highlighted, for instance, the shortfalls of German wartime diplomacy, economic planning, and racialized strategic thought associated with the tactical and operational–achievements that figured so prominently in the U.S. postwar military

[12] *War on the Rocks* (https://warontherocks.com) and *Foreign Affairs* (https://foreignaffairs.com) serves as useful barometers regarding strands of emerging thought in the defense-intellectual realm. Conrad Crane's "The United States Needs an Information Warfare Command: A Historical Examination" (June 14, 2019, https://warontherocks.com/2019/06/the-united-states-needs-an-information-warfare-command-a-historical-examination/) and Heidi Tworek's "Information Warfare Is Here To Stay" (April 25, 2019, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/germany/2019-04-25/information-warfare-here-stay) indicate the movement of "information"-related discourse to the more mainstream defense-intellectual public discussion space. The RAND Corporation maintains a web page ("Information Operations," at https://www.rand.org/topics/information-operations.html), dedicated to covering information operations and warfare, which include "the collection of tactical information about an adversary as well as the dissemination of propaganda in pursuit of a competitive advantage over an opponent." Blog and commentary topics include Twitter insider threats, Russian designs on American domestic politics, and "machine learning."

[13] Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Information Operations*, JP 3-13 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2012), https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_13.pdf.

[14] See Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 2 for the core thesis that the German officer corps successfully transferred a racialized and reductionistic view of Wehrmacht mobile and defensive operations on the Eastern Front via the after-action and "lessons learned" synthesis efforts resident within the Halder Group, and 131–132 for specific notes on how S.L.A. Marshall and Liddell Hart praised Erich von Manstein's *Lost Victories.* Also, recent sources that detail the Herculean industrial, economic, social, political, and strategic-tactical-operational effort behind the Soviet counterattack and advance in 1943–1945 reveals that the Russians were the very opposite of the racialized brutes depicted in the postwar light by German officers. Richard Overy's *Russia's War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1997) depicts the social, industrial, economic, and military foundation of Russian victory on the Eastern Front. depicts the large-scale industrial evacuation of the Soviet industrial base (170–171), Soviet small-unit innovation and toughness (175–176, in Stalingrad), and the Soviet rearmament and tactical-operational-strategic doctrine improvement effort that supported victory at Kursk (186–203, for the conditions that enabled victory in Kursk).

discourse.[15] Other thinkers have also highlighted how a selective representation of European colonial war influenced the doctrinal development process associated with U.S. counterinsurgency planning.[16] Historians have also identified the unique enabling circumstances, to include population displacement and control and torture, associated with certain episodes of European colonial warfare deemed worthy of emulation by current U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, which include the French experience in Algeria, the British experience in Malaysia, and the British experience in the Northern Ireland "Troubles" during Operation BANNER.[17]

As Michael Howard has said, with regard to such "disagreeable facts"[18]:

> It is in fact the function of the historian proper to discover and record what those complicated and disagreeable realities are. He has to find out, as Leopold von Ranke, the father of modern historiography, put it, 'what really happened'. And this must inevitably involve a critical examination of the 'myth', assessing and discarding its patriotic basis and probing deeply into the things it leaves unsaid…Inevitably the honest historian discovers, and must expose, things which are not compatible with the national myth; but to allow him to do so is necessary, not simply to confirm to the values which the war was fought to defend, but to preserve military efficiency for the future.[19]

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[15] Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2008,) 182–184 and 207–209 for the racial science foundation of the Nazi New Order, 223–224 and 256 for the dynamic of "organized disorder" within Nazi-occupied Europe, 261 and 286 for the authorization of self-defeating "plunder policies," and 322–326 on the failure of Axis allies to overcome the "political sterility" of Nazi strategic thought aimed at conquest and plunder vice coalition-building and the attendant warfighting advantages that might have conferred.

[16] Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, 196. The specific citation is related to the absorption of French counterinsurgency theorist David Galula's prescriptions for COIN into FM 3-24 because the authors of 3–24 felt that "Galula told them what they wanted to hear" despite the "exaggerated," if not "falsified," nature of the French COIN claims.

[17] See Porch, 181–182, 175–178 for notes on torture and coercive COIN tactics during the French campaign in Algeria; 255 for how British COIN tactics included "population resettlement" and the movement of ethnic Chinese to "rural ghettoes, and 276–277 for how British authorities applied a "rerun of failed tactics" to the Northern Ireland conflict.

[18] Michael Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," 27.

[19] Howard, "The Use and Abuse of Military History," 27. Gian Gentile also cites this article in *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counter-Insurgency*, 141.

Historical analogy lends credibility towards any dialogue the considers how to fight.[20] However, Hannibal encircled and annihilated the Romans at Cannae only once.[21] The German military historian Hans Delbrück devoted his life and intellectual energy towards "clearing away the underbrush of legend" and educating both military professionals and the general public about military myths, legends, and the linkages between ways of battle and the inner workings and politics of societies throughout history.[22] Military planners who approach the past in a selective and biased manner risk leveraging military myth against problems that defy reduction to the status of direct historical analogy. For example, Strachan contends that German military planners pursued the "Cannae" battle ideal to futility during the First World War.[23] The aim of this project is to illuminate the past and present ties between U.S. military thought as expressed in doctrine and the imagined and historical reality of war in Europe in order to explore how the use and abuse of military history has shaped the genesis of U.S. military doctrine and, perhaps, why it has and will continue to vex U.S. efforts to make war, win war, and sustain peace.

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[20] U.S. Marine Corps Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–3, *Tactics* (Washington, DC: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1997) https://www.marines.mil/Portals/1/Publications/MCDP%201-3%20Tactics.pdf, cites a number of historical battles and aligns them against tactical principles. See 16–19 for discussion on how the Battle of Anzio in 1944 illustrates the pitfalls of tactical indecisiveness, 27–29 on how Union cavalry action during the Battle of Gettysburg exemplifies decisiveness, 50–52 for how Operation "Dewey Canyon" as carried out in Vietnam in 1969 supported the goal of "trapping the enemy," 104–105 on how General Grant's pursuit of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia enabled the Union to "exploit and finish" the enemy, and 107–108 on how U.S. Marine leaders employed their reserve to win the Battle of Tarawa in 1943.

[21] Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1–3, *Tactics*, identifies the Battle of Cannae, fought in 216 BC, as an example of "a clear tactical decision achieved." The addendum is that tactical engagements should achieve operational and strategic goals. See 20–24 for perspective on the Battle of Cannae.

[22] Gordon A. Craig, "Delbrück: The Military Historian," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 326 for how Delbrück applied his own historical method aimed at sorting out truth and history from legend to the military record of the past; 327 for how he served as a vocal critic of the military thinking and strategic approach within the First World War German state; 336–337 for how Delbrück reconstructed the history of ancient battles such as Marathon and Cannae in order to understand what really happened there.

[23] Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, (London: Routledge, 2004), 130–132 for Strachan's thesis that Field Marshal Alfred von Schlieffen failed to distinguish between the tactical implications and requirements of fighting and winning a battle of annihilation and the operational-strategic implications, for instance, of violating Belgian neutrality.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Military thinkers have thought about how to fight and have translated their thoughts into various principles aligned with the "Principles of War" theme since the 18th century if not earlier, and European military thought influenced and inspired U.S. military thought.[24] The record of how U.S. military thinkers since the 19th century have considered the intellectual legacy of Carl von Clausewitz and his work *On War* or not, for instance, indicates that appreciation of *On War* falls into two discernable intellectual veins: a generally *reductionistic-extractive approach* and a mode of inquiry grounded in *historicism and contextual analysis* of both the text of *On War* and the circumstances unique to Clausewitz's time.

The reductionistic-extractive approach identifies Clausewitz as the "Madhi of Mass".[25] This approach contends that Clausewitzian thought orients primarily on the annihilation of enemy combat formations, improperly and rigidly focuses on destroying a single "center of gravity" via decisive battle, and neglects the importance of altering adversary decision-making processes.[26] The reductionistic-extractive approach also contends that the emergence of such "non state actor"-driven conflict as guerilla war

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[24] Alger, *The Quest for Victory*, 178–184 for the transmission and perpetuation of the listing of "principles of war" and their integration into military instruction, education, and thought.

[25] Christopher Bassford, "John Keegan and the Grand Tradition of Trashing Clausewitz: a Polemic," *War in History* 1, no. 3 (November 1994), 319, http://libproxy.nps.edu/login?url=https://www-jstor-org.libproxy.nps.edu/stable/26004375.

[26] The doctrine of John Boyd serves as the cornerstone of the U.S. Marine Corps "maneuver warfare" doctrine detailed within *Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1: Warfighting.* Ian Brown provides a comprehensive transcript of Boyd's famous "Patterns of Conflict" brief as delivered to Marines in the late 1980s in *A New Conception of War: John Boyd, the U. S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare* (Quantico: Marine Corps University Press, 2018,) 209–213, and 212 for Slide #41, which delivers the critique on Clausewitz. Robert Coram, Boyd's biographer, details Boyd's generally dismissive attitude towards Clausewitz in favor of Sun Tzu in *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (New York: Back Bay Books,) 330–334. Grant T. Hammond corroborates the thesis that Boyd reduced Clausewitzian thought to an attrition mindset with *The Mind of War: John Boyd and American Security* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2001,) 129–130.

renders the "Clausewitzian Universe" increasingly irrelevant.[27] Clausewitzian reasoning and strategy should "disappear"[28] as "terrorists, guerillas, bandits, and robbers…motivated by fanatical, ideologically-based loyalties" wage the "low intensity conflict" that Clausewitzian analysis is ill-equipped to appreciate.[29]

The approach that incorporates historicism and contextual analysis of Clausewitzian thought considers the intellectual, cultural, and historical context within which Clausewitz lived, studied, and wrote. This approach considers the impact of the emergence of the recognizably modern nation-state, the changing character of battlefield combat, and the influence that such belief systems as Pietism had on Clausewitz and his intellectual development.[30] This perspective also considers how such Prussian reformers as Scharnhorst influenced Clausewitz, and also how Clausewitz himself thought about the linkages between military theory and the reality of war.[31] Historians more aligned with this approach contend that much of modern scholarship reduces Clausewitzian thought to bromides shaped to fit the needs of military managerial science and those seeking to

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[27] Martin Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War* (New York: The Free Press, 1991), 40, 41, 49; 58 for Van Creveld's comment on the "Clausewitzian Universe." I include Van Creveld due to the fact that his ideas have garnered attention within corners of the U.S. defense intellectual establishment; *The Transformation of War* features a positive review from Colonel Michael Wyly, USMC, who at time of publishing was Vice President of the Marine Corps University and a key proponent of the Marine Corps "maneuver warfare" doctrine.

[28] Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 225.

[29] Van Creveld, 197 for Van Creveld's list of belligerents and 20–21 for his description of the low intensity conflict (LIC).

[30] Peter Paret, *Clausewitz and the State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3rd edition 2007), 3–5 for Paret's approach towards the political climate of Clausewitz's time; 32 for how the changing character of 19th century warfare, to include the mass mobilization behind the revolutionary French armies, influenced Clausewitz; 34–35 on how Clausewitz's participation in combat in the French revolutionary wars of 1793–1794 influenced him; 36–37 for details on how "A bourgeoisie that was growing ambitious and self-assertive demanded training for its sons that was secular and realistic, and that would breach some of the restrictive, aristocratic walls encapsulating German society. Pietism, with its rejection of external, formal standards of thought and conduct for the sake of achieving a rich inner development, was one major source of the new education."

[31] Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 71 for notes on how Scharnhorst, the Prussian reformer, 351 for Clausewitz's approach towards other thinkers he considered too doctrinaire and prescriptive; 371 for Clausewitz's thoughts on the integration of consideration of emotional forces into theory and the unattainability of a "positive" military doctrine that can truly "lay down valid rules for the conduct of war."

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"exonerate" armed forces from the stigma of failure, to the detriment of consideration of the forces of "anger, hatred, and primordial violence," which also appear in *On War.*[32]

U.S. military thought has historically applauded the German tactical and operational record. Historians have appreciated the story of the First World War-era evolution and adaptation of German small-unit squad level tactics.[33] Historical commentary also isolates examples of praiseworthy small-unit German tactical success, such as the seizure of the Belgian Eban Emael fortress in 1940 and the rescue of Benito Mussolini in 1943, to inform and gird theories of special operations warfare.[34] Additionally, such German concepts as *Auftragstaktik* and *Schwerpunkt*—respectively denoting decentralized orders within a command climate centered on trust and the focus of main military effort—informed the Marine Corps "maneuver warfare renaissance" by way

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[32] Donald Abenheim and Carolyn Halladay, *Soldiers, War, Knowledge, and Citizenship: German-American Essays on Civil Military Relations* (Norderstedt, Germany: Miles Verlag, 2017), 211–212 for commentary on the lack of emphasis on primordial violence and anger detailed in *On War* (Book I, Ch. 1, Part 28, p. 89). Also, 213–215 in *Soldiers, War, Knowledge, and Citizenship* for commentary on the relevance of the historical context of *On War* to today, and 221 for commentary on the focus of much of Clausewitz scholarship on the "first trinity" of the people, government, and military to the exclusion of the role that "primordial violence, hatred, and enmity" play in war.

[33] Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics,* 171–173 on the decentralization of firepower and maneuver capabilities towards the German squad and devolution of command responsibility to lieutenants and noncommissioned officers; 176 on the integration of pioneer/combat engineer type formations into German tactical innovation efforts; 177 on the failure of German "operational art" and the consequent forcing function on the development of "stormtroop tactics" as the solution to stalemate. *Stormtroop Tactics* was sold physically at *The Marine Shop*, the merchandise shop associated with the Marine Corps Association, when I was stationed in Quantico in 2013–2016.

[34] William H. McRaven, *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare*, (New York: Presidio Press, 1995,) 8 for the establishment of the "six principles of special operations" against which various small-unit actions are evaluated, to include Operation "Oak," the glider-borne German mission to rescue Benito Mussolini from captivity in 1943; 60–69 for analysis on the German seizure of Eban Emael in 1940; 188 for McRaven's assessment of Operation "Oak."

of historical synthesis and analysis aimed at promoting U.S. excellence within the tactical and operational levels of war.[35]

U.S. military thought also praised the historical record of the German General Staff and posited that the organization possessed a "genius for war" and that the "more effective military institutions" represented within the German armed forces generated "combat superiority".[36] U.S. military planners looked to the combat record of the Wehrmacht as demonstrated on the Eastern Front in order to frame thought on land war against the Soviet Union solicited the thoughts of German officers, who willingly expounded on the importance of the "mobile defense".[37] German general officers also provided their input directly to the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command during the drafting process of Field Manual 100–5 during 1974–1975.[38]

Critical historical analysis lends context to the discourse surrounding the U.S. perception of German fighting skill. Recent scholarship, for example, contends that high-profile missions celebrated for their tactical proficiency and strategic relevance by U.S.

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[35] Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, 9 for the thesis that German First World War tactical assault team tactics were "maneuver type tactics"; 14 and the association of "mission type orders" and command decentralization with the German army; 18 for a digression on the importance of the *schwerpunckt* and corresponding focus of military effort in war; 43 citation of General Erwin Rommel's *Infantry Attacks* as a positive example of a work that identifies the thought processes of a successful German commander in the First World War; 42 for a positive view on how the Second World War *Wehrmacht* taught their lieutenants to think "two levels up" in order to understand how their unit mission fit within the overall task pursued by their higher command echelon. The context of these citations is excellence on the immediate battlefield; the *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* omits mention of any strategic-diplomatic trends that contributed to German defeat.

[36] T. N. Dupuy, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807–1945*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977), 300 for the association of "combat superiority" in terms of how many casualties the Germans inflicted on their opponents, superior performance of junior officers and soldiers, and better "imagination and bolder initiative."

[37] Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 64–66 for the formation of the Halder Group under the supervision of the German general Franz Halder; 67–69 for the inclusion of accused war criminals within the group and their production of a number of historical studies on the German experience in the Eastern Front; and 70 for how the U.S. Army provided a copy of the capstone Army doctrinal manual, FM 100–5, to Halder and his generals in 1952 for their critiques. Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) No. 20–269, "Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia," July 1953, https://history.army.mil/html/books/104/104-22-1/index.html, is a good example of how this group provided American military planners a German-influenced perspective on fighting Russians.

[38] Herbert, "Deciding What Has to Be Done," 62–66.

researchers actually served a primarily propagandistic mission within Nazi Germany.[39] Critical scholarship also contends that German officers mounted an effort to recast the German armed forces as a mythical "Clean Wehrmacht" and have identified the racialized quality of the German "lessons learned" compendium as published by the Halder Group.[40]

Historians have also argued that German military thought oriented excessively on tactical and operational achievement, to the detriment of logistical and economic considerations in the epoch of total war, the actual moral consequences of support to Hitler's policies, and the unsurmountable limitations associated with waging war in the interior of Central Europe against two foes dismissed for ideological reasons as inferior.[41] Scholars also argue that German planners experienced a "loss of reality,"[42] misapplied the lessons of the rapid campaigns in Scandinavia and the Low Countries, assumed the

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[39] Andreas Alexander Handschuh, "Otto Skorzeny and the read conduct of Unternehmen Eiche and Unternehmen Panzerfaust," NPS Master's Thesis, 2017, at http://hdl.handle.net/10945/56935; see 2–4 for details on discrepancies between fact and fiction, 6 for the absence of critical scholarship regarding the missions, 35–40 and 47–48 for how Nazi mythmaking and propagandization of the missions served strategic propagandistic purposes and German wartime recruitment efforts during a time of general strategic reversal, and also how postwar mythmaking was congruent with a public discourse that sought to disassociate the German soldier from Nazi crimes. The author relied on German-language sources to a far greater extent than McRaven's *Spec Ops:*

[40] Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 248–249 on the core thesis that the "clean Wehrmacht" myth emerged from the concerted effort of German officers to recast the record of the German armed forces, cultural transfer between German officers and American officers, and the willingness of American diplomats and military officers to overlook German crimes in the interest of learning how to fight the Russians; 68–69 for an account of the Halder Group. Smelser and Davies cite Heinz Guderian's *Panzer Leader* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2002) as a high-profile example of a work that contributes to the "clean Wehrmacht" discourse and disassociates senior German army leaders from Nazi genocide. See *Panzer Leader,* 446, for Guderian's disavowal of any knowledge of the Nazi death camp system and "Final Solution." Also, see DA PAM 20-269, "Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia," 2 for the following account of the "Slav psyche": "The Slav psyche especially where it is under more or less pronounced Asiatic influences covers a wide range in which fanatic conviction, extreme bravery, and cruelty bordering on bestiality are coupled with childlike kindliness and susceptibility to sudden fear and terror… when he was dealt a severe, well-timed blow, a mass reaction of fear and terror would throw him and his comrades completely off balance."

[41] Gross, *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare,* 192 on the absence of a coherent "Blitzkrieg" strategy in Poland and France during 1939–1940; 205 on Hitler's *lebensraum* policy as tied to the war effort; 209 on the economic limitations Germany began the war with; 214 on German staff assumptions about how Blitzkrieg-type doctrine would be successful in Russia due to validation in France; and 215–216 and 246 on German inattention to logistical considerations in the Soviet Union and how German logistics were oriented on a short campaign that included forage as a procurement option.

[42] Gross, 257.

"Blitzkrieg Legend" would hold in France, and were "operationally winning to death" in on the Eastern Front.[43] In other words, grand tactics and operations cannot, in the end, supplant grand strategy and circumvent concrete material restraints.

## C. RESEARCH DESIGN

The thesis incorporates aspects of the method employed by Peter Paret in *Clausewitz and the State* (1976), the leading biography of the Prussian theorist of war, which also explains how to best make sense of Clausewitzian theory. Specifically, Paret weaves political, intellectual, historical, and psychological context together throughout his appreciation of Clausewitz's life and thoughts on war and the nature of the state.[44] The present research design initially considers past and current discourse about Clausewitz and his work within the military history and defense intellectual realms. The research design then transitions to assesses whether the same intellectual divergence observable within U.S. consideration of Clausewitz and *On War* applies to the generation of U.S. military doctrine after the Second World War. The thesis considers how American military planners studied and absorbed German tactical-operational "lessons learned" during both the 1950s Halder Group activities and 1970s–1980s production of the various iterations of FM 100–5. The analysis of the story of the adoption of Clausewitz and *On War* within U.S. military thought generates the analytical framework required to consider the impact of European war on U.S. military thought as it unfolded within the relationship between the U.S. military and the historical record of German arms in total war in Europe.

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[43] Karl-Heinz Freiser, *The Blitzkrieg Legend*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 351.

[44] Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*; see 32 for notes on how the French Revolution brought new strategic and tactical considerations to the European battlefield; 34–35 on Paret's consideration of how a youthful Clausewitz responded to mobilization and war psychologically; 37 and 45 for the emergence of mass movements such as Pietism and the interest in modernization within Prussian society; 45–46 on the intellectual climate within Prussia and also within Clausewitz's regiment; 71–77 for the impact that the Prussian reformer Gerhard von Scharnhorst had on Clausewitz in addition to Paret's consideration of the psychological forces at work after the death of Clausewitz's father; 119 for Clausewitz's response to de Jomini's military thought as published during his time; 366 for perspective on dialectical relationships within *On War*; 373 and the importance Clausewitz attached to emotional and non-rational forces when considering war; 374 on Clausewitz's integration of psychological consideration of personality types into his own writing; and 438–440 for additional material on Clausewitz's conception of the "state" and the impact it had on his own work.

The thesis will incorporate the following sources and materials: the doctrinal publications themselves, secondary historical sources utilized to inform the drafting process, and sources such as professional military journals that reflect U.S. military discourse revolving around primary and secondary European military history sources.

## D. THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis consists of four chapters. The second chapter considers the inclusion of *On War* within U.S. military thought and how American appreciation of Clausewitz and *On War* has diverged into two intellectual approaches. The first approach constructs a de facto Clausewitz myth and treats *On War* as a "how to fight manual." The second approach employs the analytical framework employed by Peter Paret within *Clausewitz and the State* and expounds on the nature of the work as meditation on the interplay between themes not typically considered within the defense-intellectual scholarship field in order to delineate between the history that informs consideration of Clausewitz, and the myths associated with consideration of his work.

The third chapter focuses on U.S. appreciation of German fighting prowess after the Second World War. This chapter also considers histories such as Gross's *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare* critical of the performance of the German *Wehrmacht* and General Staff during the Second World War. This chapter illuminates the pitfalls of an unqualified appreciation of German tactical-operational achievements in the Second World War in light of critical history highlighting German operational-strategic planning deficiencies, Germany's racialized policy towards conquered territories, and German postwar mythmaking. The third chapter then considers integration of the German fighting approach into U.S. military thought as published within U.S. armed service trade journals, capstone U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army doctrinal publications, and the broader realm of academic inquiry into the history of German arms in modern Europe.[45]

[45] *Battle Leadership,* for instance, is viewable for purchase at The Marine Shop, affiliated with the Marine Corps Association, at https://www.marineshop.net/battle-leadership-pb-0940328410. Likewise, *Storm of Steel* is available at https://www.marineshop.net/storm-of-steel-pb-0142437905.

## II. WHAT IS WAR, WHO IS CLAUSEWITZ, AND WHY DID HE JOIN THE U.S. ARMY?

The search for the influence of ideas in military institutions is fraught with peril, since the evidence is often ephemeral or misleading. Since the 18th century, European military thought has often operated in profound ways in the U.S. military. Seen from the perspective of the year 2021, then, the case of Carl von Clausewitz, the great Prussian theorist of war, is no exception. In this question of Clausewitz and his influence, two approaches of method and thought can be said to operate in the U.S. with regard to the Prussian and his thought: the *reductionistic-extractive* approach and the *historic-contextual* approach. The figures of the reductionistic-extractive approach have often wrongly and tendentiously isolated and transplanted a small number of key terms and phrases from *On War* into U.S. doctrine, military educational curricula, and the analysis of past U.S. military failure in since the Vietnam War.[46] These persons also assert that Clausewitz oriented excessively on linear battle as fought in the classical period of the wars of the cabinets in the 18th century to the Napoleonic age and, despite his death in 1831 from cholera, generated the intellectual climate responsible for ill effects of total war as manifest in twentieth century warfare in the years 1914–1945.[47] This school also erroneously maintains that such phenomena as guerilla war, terrorism, and the so called progressive decay of the "Westphalian" state-centric political institutions renders the Clausewitzian "state-centric analytical model" irrelevant.[48]

The historic-contextual approach taken in the world of German letters, in turn, considers the intellectual, cultural, psychological, and political context within which such figures as Clausewitz lived, studied, and wrote. Most importantly, such scholars analyze

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[46] See Summers, *On Strategy*, 5–6 for the integration of aspects of the Clausewitzian trinity into analysis of U.S. failure in Vietnam.

[47] J.F.C. Fuller, *The Conduct of War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 60. See also, regarding Basil Liddell Hart's polemical comment that Clausewitz was the "Madhi of Mass" within John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 196), 181.

[48] Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 41.

how Clausewitz and others of his time fought in and interpreted the levels of war. Peter Paret's *Clausewitz and the State* (1976 and 2007) diverges from the critical-reductionistic-extractive approach. Paret broadly examines how Clausewitz perceived war in the context of the rise of Napoleon within absolutist Europe as well as within the intellectual climate shaped by the 18th century German classicism of Goethe, Schiller, and Beethoven.

The historic-contextual approach expands consideration of *On War* beyond a handful of catch phrases and buzzwords. This school shows how Clausewitz thought and acted on a number of themes not commonly referenced within the broader literature: the utility of military theory to understand war; the dynamic effect of uncertainty and psychological forces within relationship between government, military forces, and the people; and the importance of military genius as fusion between intellect and moral and physical courage. Military thought in the Anglo Saxon world since 1918 that either selectively extracts passages or condemns the Prussian as the "Madhi of Mass" affords little consideration to the age of European revolution in the years 1780–1850, German classicism, and biography grounded in the 18th and 19th centuries—a time that has become too remote in the minds of too many interested in the character of war and military thought.

## A. THE LIFE OF CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ AND THE COMPOSITION OF *ON WAR*

### 1. Clausewitz and the French Revolutionary Wars

Carl von Clausewitz was born in 1780 in Prussia. His father was a retired Prussian army lieutenant, and his family claimed noble lineage that was eventually formally recognized within the Prussian royal court in 1827.[49] The young Clausewitz saw combat in the Prussian army for the first time in 1793 during the defensive campaign against the initial wave of French revolutionary violence in the Rhineland.[50] It was here that Clausewitz encountered the physical manifestation of the transformation of the nature of warfare wrought by the French revolutionary politics that exploited and mobilized societal

[49] Paret, "Clausewitz," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, edited by Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 188.

[50] Paret, 188.

energies towards conquest and destruction.[51] Paret surveys the wide-ranging transformation in warfare that occurred during the initial wars of the French revolution and subsequent Napoleonic campaigns, all of which Clausewitz was associated with as either direct combatant or staff officer. Clausewitz would come to appreciate the arrival of a new form of warfare, marked by political and psychological mobilization of mass armies and accompanied by new battlefield tactics.[52] Clausewitz would also come to perceive a clear connection between political activity within a given community and the activity of warfare: "by revolutionizing society, the state was able as never before to exploit the energies of society for war."[53]

The army demobilized in 1795, and Clausewitz returned to Prussia after gaining battle experience during raids, small-unit detachment action, and ambushes.[54] He remained in garrison until 1801 and then departed to Berlin in order to attend a three year long military school overseen by Gerhard von Scharnhorst, who had served within the Hanoverian army during the French revolutionary wars and who had then accepted an offer to join Prussian service in 1801.[55] Scharnhorst exercised tremendous influence on Clausewitz in Berlin, and indeed throughout Clausewitz's life, and inspired Clausewitz's later thoughts on the characteristics of military genius, his skeptical attitude towards the

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[51] Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 26 for notes on the shifting ground battle tactics of the French revolutionary armies and 32–33 for notes on the mobilization effect of the psychological forces resident within the French revolution on the French revolutionary armies.

[52] Paret, 26–27 for notes on tactical innovation within the French revolutionary armies and 32–33 for notes on how Clausewitz perceived the behavior of the new revolutionary French state and the impact it had on war.

[53] Paret, 32. See also 30 on how Clausewitz appreciated the arrival of "expendable mass armies" in the later 1790s and the impact this arrival had on the nature of what had previously been more limited warfare during 1792–1793.

[54] Paret, "Clausewitz," 188.

[55] Paret, 189.

"pretentious theories" resident within European military thought, and the importance of grounding military theory in sound understanding of military history.[56]

Clausewitz graduated at the top of his class in 1804, was assigned as the adjutant to Prince August, and in 1805 published his first professional military article that critiqued the strategic theory of Heinrich Dietrich von Bülow, who at the time was a prominent German military theorist.[57] Clausewitz believed that Bülow's scholarship, which defined strategy as "all military movements out of the enemy's cannon range or range of vision," and tactics as "all movement within this range"[58] was inadequate and inherently flawed. Bülow, Clausewitz charged, had constructed an argument that was problematic for several reasons: the argument was too closely connected to the pace of technological change and inclined to shift as weapon ranges and capabilities shifts; analysis was too closely linked to geography and weapon math and did not consider the physical and psychological effects of fighting; and, finally, did not consider the full range of factors related to war such as soldier morale and commander psychology.[59] Clausewitz, instead, defined strategy and tactics as theories applicable to all past, present, and future war: "Tactics constitute the theory of the use of armed forces in battle; strategy forms the theory of using battle for the purposes of the war."[60] Paret observes that Clausewitz was drawn to considering the "timeless phenomena" of war via application of observable reality and hypothesis.[61]

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[56] See Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 71–76 for how Scharnhorst influenced Clausewitz; 71 for how Scharnhorst's "conviction that the study of history must lie at the center of any advanced study of war,"; 71 for Scharnhorst's skepticism regarding Jomini and other theorists of the time; and particularly 74–76 for how Scharnhorst served as a second father figure – "the father and friend of my spirit" – to Clausewitz after the death of Clausewitz's father in 1802 and first wife in 1803.

[57] Paret, "Clausewitz," 189–190.

[58] Paret, 190.

[59] Paret, 190–191.

[60] Paret, 190.

[61] Paret, 191.

### 2. 1806: Clausewitz's Return to the Battlefield and the Defeat of Prussia

Clausewitz returned to the battlefield in 1806 as Prussia entered the war against Napoleon. Clausewitz and Prince August led a Prussian grenadier battalion at the Battle of Auerstädt, north of Jena.[62] The French captured Clausewitz and the prince as the Prussians withdrew from the battlefield and exhausted their ammunition during a rearguard battle.[63] Clausewitz spent the next year in Paris as a prisoner and returned to Prussia in late 1807. He then travelled to Königsberg, the temporary home of the Prussian government, in 1808 and swiftly joined Scharnhorst and the circle of reformers that sought to modernize Prussian military institutions and solve the problems that had generated defeat at Jena and Auerstadt.[64] Specifically, Scharnhorst and Clausewitz supported ending the noble monopoly on officer commissions, reforming the rigid Prussian disciplinary and drill system, and encouraging initiative amongst all ranks in the Prussian military.[65] Clausewitz served as personal assistant to Scharnhorst, and then accompanied him and the rest of the Prussian government during the return to Berlin after the end of the French occupation. Scharnhorst appointed Clausewitz to the Prussian general staff and faculty at the new Prussian *kriegschule*, and Clausewitz also became the military tutor to the Prussian crown prince in 1810.[66]

Clausewitz continued to write and think about war at this time, and pondered how theory could make sense of war.[67] The great current of German philosophy at this time, German idealism and romanticism, manifested as aesthetic resistance within art, literature, and music to certain features of the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason that had previously emerged in Western Europe that led to too great a role of the natural sciences in human affairs and forms of theory and universalism that went against the legacy of the

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62 Paret, 191.

63 Paret, 191.

64 Paret, 191–192.

65 Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 139–139.

66 Paret, "Clausewitz," 192–193.

67 Paret, 193.

particular.[68] German romanticism centered around such figures as Johann Goethe and Friedrich Schiller and embraced contemplation of what was infinite, mystical, and rooted in an earlier time.[69] Romanticism held that the poet was best positioned, as a genius, to navigate and reveal the nature of the hidden and irrational world to the general public audience.[70] Paret observes that Clausewitz did not engage with the Romantic perspective that embraced the mystical and antique, and instead internalized the precepts of the anti-rationalist *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) movement that embraced "unity of all phenomena," and encouraged attainment of "internal and external harmony" and the "disciplined mastery of thought and form".[71]

Paret also observes that Clausewitz adopted many of the patterns of thought and argumentation, to include the use of the dialectic and ideal types taken from philosophy, prevalent at the time and would incorporate these patterns, later, into *On War*: "thesis and antithesis, contradiction, polarity, the separation and connection between the active and passive, and positive and negative."[72] Clausewitz departed from the precepts of the Romantic movement as he sought to apply the aforementioned ideas to the actual physical, intellectual, and psychological aspects of political activity and war.[73] Simply put, Clausewitz sought to extend a generalized philosophical approach well present among the educated of his day on hand in the nobility and the bourgeoisie that had emerged within the world of the mind to the reality that he had lived ever since he was a cadet of twelve and in combat against the French revolutionary armies in the Rhine Valley and the Vosges above it.

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[68] Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 149. See also Robert Gildea, *Barricades and Borders: Europe 1800–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 130.

[69] Gildea, *Barricades and Borders*, 130–131.

[70] Gildea, *Barricades and Borders,* 132.

[71] Paret, *Clausewitz and the* State, 149.

[72] Paret, 150.

[73] Paret, "Clausewitz," 194.

### 3. Clausewitz in Russian Service, 1811–1815

France defeated Austria at Wagram in 1809 after a brief war and, in 1811, subsequently compelled Prussia to open borders and territory for French forces staging for the attack into Russia.[74] Clausewitz strongly opposed this and, along with about thirty other officers, resigned his Prussian commission in protest and travelled to Russia.[75] Clausewitz gained appointment as a colonel in the Tsar's army and accompanied Russian forces throughout 1812 and 1813. He attempted to return to service in the Prussian military in 1813.[76] The Prussian king denied this request, and Clausewitz remained formally in Russian uniform and informally assigned to Scharnhorst, who died after the Battle of Lützen from wounds sustained in combat.[77] Clausewitz served as the chief of staff for a small multinational force that cleared the French army away from the Baltic coast, and eventually reentered Prussian service during the "Hundred Days" marked by the return of Napoleon in 1815.[78] Clausewitz served as chief of staff of the third Prussian corps that blocked and delayed French reinforcements from assisting the main body of Napoleon's troops.[79] Paret observes that, while he was blocked from more visible and prestigious assignments due to his resignation and reformist impulses, "few officers his age could look back on experiences as varied as his, ranging from combat and staff duties to strategic planning and participation in politico-military decisions of the highest significance."[80]

### 4. The Return to Prussian Service and *On War*

Clausewitz served as the chief of staff of Prussian Rhineland forces for several years, resumed his study of military history and theory in 1816, and proceeded to assume

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[74] Paret, 195.

[75] Paret, "Clausewitz," 195.

[76] Paret, 195.

[77] Paret, 195.

[78] Paret, 195.

[79] Paret, 195.

[80] Paret, 195.

leadership of the Berlin Prussian war college in 1818. He began writing *On War* in 1819 and completed the first six chapters and drafts of the final two planned chapters by 1827. Clausewitz stopped writing *On War* in 1827 when he concluded that he had not properly explained and incorporated two key thoughts about war that he had been pondering for some time, and therefore needed to revise the *On War* manuscript which he believed to be "as a rather formless mass that must be thoroughly reworked once more."[81] Specifically, Clausewitz wrote the following regarding the need for revision:

> War can be of two kinds, in the sense that either the objective is to *overthrow the enemy* – to render him politically helpless or militarily impotent, thus forcing him to sign whatever peace we please; or *merely to occupy some of his frontier districts* so that we can annex them or use them for bargaining at the peace negotiations. Transitions from one type to the other will of course recur in my treatment; but the fact that the aims of the two types are quite different must be clear at all times, and their points of irreconcilability brought out.
>
> This distinction between the two kinds of war is an actual fact. But no less practical is the importance of another point that must be made absolutely clear, namely that *war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means*. If this is firmly kept in mind throughout, it will greatly facilitate the study of the subject and the whole will be easier to analyze.[82]

Clausewitz wrote histories of several Napoleonic campaigns before beginning the changes in order to better understand how to work his ideas about the dual forms of war and the connection between war and politics and was only able to revise a few chapters before being detailed to the Prussian artillery inspectorate in 1830.[83] Prussia then mobilized in order to prepare to meet the prospect of French revolutionary violence, and Clausewitz assumed the post of chief of staff of the mobilized Prussian army.[84] He died in

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[81] Paret, 196.

[82] Paret, 196–197; Paret notes the italics indicate emphasis in the original correspondence penned by Clausewitz. See also 210 for Paret's explanation that, in German, *Politik* may translate as either "policy" or "politics" in English.

[83] Paret, 197.

[84] Paret, 197.

1831 from the cholera epidemic which began in Russia and then spread to Poland and Western Europe.[85]

*On War* remains his most widely known composition, and Paret's 1979 translation —or excerpts thereof—features, ubiquitously, in perhaps every professional military educational program syllabus and reading list encountered by U.S. military officers. *On War* consists of eight books. Book I, "On the Nature of War," defines war in social and political context, identifies elements such as danger and friction that are always present in war, and also identifies how the demands of war call for the exercise of "military genius".[86] Clausewitz considers the psychological nature of military genius in order to best identify those traits of character and intellect best suited to overcome the friction present in war. As Paret observes,

> Originality and creativity raised to the highest power—which is how the late Enlightenment and idealist philosophy defined genius—were thus used by Clausewitz to identify and interpret general intellectual and psychological qualities, just as they represented and helped explain the freedom of will and action that was potentially present in each human being.[87]

Paret also observes that Clausewitz introduces, in Book I, the two dialectical relationships involving war that endure throughout the entire book and which make for

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[85] Paret, 197.

[86] Clausewitz, *On War*, 75 for Clausewitz's initial definition of war and the "wrestler" metaphor; 80–81 for how the "political object" determines the military objective and the amount of effort required to meet that objective; 84 for the superiority of the defense over the attack; 85 for the element of chance within war; 86 for how the art of war "deals with living and moral forces;" 87 for war as the "continuation of policy by other means;" 88 for how war is never "autonomous" and decoupled from political activity; 89 for Clausewitz's use of the "trinity" image to describe war, the "true chameleon," and associated three points of primordial violence and hatred, chance and probability, and subordination as instrument of political reason. See 92–93 for differentiation between different objectives in war – between the total defeat of the enemy and the seizure of terrain, for instance; 95 for how combat alone serves as the means to serve the end of war; 100–101 for the introduction of the concept of military genius; 102 for Clausewitz's employment of *coup d'oeil* (first glance or hit of the eye) and how it is a trait possessed by the military genius; 106–107 for a series of psychological profiles of various officer types, with the fourth type identified on 107 as the ideal type; 111 for the importance of "practical intelligence;" 112 for a final summation on the traits of the military genius; 119–121 for "friction" as a constant characteristic found in war.

[87] Paret, "Clausewitz," 204.

problems among a readership today that cannot understand this method of thought as applied to military affairs and the nature of war. The first dialectical relationship is the relationship and interplay between the concepts of the theoretical ideal of war—"absolute war"—that, in an abstract sense as present in a plan on paper, involves the total destruction of the enemy, and war as it actually occurs in the real world.[88] The divergence between absolute war, i.e., as an ideal type in theory and real war as it actually exists in all its confusion and contradictions of chance, purpose, anger, violence and hatred enables Clausewitz to explore the characteristics of organized violence as it occurs in the real world, and enables him to isolate, among other factors, the political nature of war and the influence that politics exercise on the conduct of war.[89] The second dialectical relationship introduced in Book I that extends throughout *On War* is captured in the argument that real war consists of three elements, a "remarkable trinity" comprised of "violence and passion; uncertainty, chance, and probability; and political purpose and effect."[90] Clausewitz proceeds to associate the "people" with violence and passion, the "commander and his army" with chance and probability, and "government" with political purpose and effect.[91]

Book II, "On the Theory of War," explores the limitations and purpose of military theory in the frame of the 17th through the 19th century and also delves into historical methods and the utility of military history of a very specific type that also is not easily comprehended in contemporary staff schools and doctrine mechanisms.[92] Book III, "On

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[88] Paret, 199–200.

[89] Paret, 200.

[90] Paret, 200; see also Clausewitz, *On War*, 89, for the outline of the trinity.

[91] Paret, "Clausewitz," 200.

[92] Clausewitz, *On War*, 136 for one critique against intellectual efforts to theorize war in terms of "fixed values"; 137 for the importance of "moral values" when considering war; 140 for the assertion that, in the end, "a positive doctrine" that serves as a reliable guide to all war problems is "unattainable;" 141 for the admonition that military theory is meant to "educate the mind of the future commander, not accompany him on the battlefield;" 146 for the knowledge required of a commander in chief; 147 for the need to transform learned knowledge into "genuine capability;" 158 for how military theory should serve as an aid to military judgment and not supplant it on the battlefield; 169 for criticism on the misuse of historical examples and extraction of bits of military theory from context; and 173for Clausewitz's observation that, within the realm of historical analysis, it is better to appreciate and examine one event in a great level of detail than "ten that are only touched on."

Strategy in General," includes chapters on force, time, and space, and also on the more indefinable, yet crucial, "moral elements" present on the battlefield that defy easy description and "have to be seen or felt," such as the "spirit or other moral qualities of an army, a general, or a government, the temper of a population in a theater of war…" and "the moral effects of victory or defeat."[93]

Book IV, "The Engagement," deals with "the essential military activity, fighting, by which its material and psychological effects comprises in simple or compound form the overall object of the war."[94] Book IV examines various physical and psychological aspects of fighting, the conditions that contribute to decision on the battlefield, and the role that large-scale engagements occupy within a successful campaign.[95] Paret identifies Books V, VI, and VII—"Military Forces," "Defense," and "The Attack," respectively—as the most "conventionally military" chapters that build upon previously introduced arguments.[96] Book VIII, "War Plans," is the final book and considers the relationship between

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[93] Clausewitz, 184–185 for Chapter Three, Book Three, "Moral Factors;" see also 190–203 for Clausewitz's thoughts on the relevance, qualities of, and limitations of: boldness, perseverance, superiority of numbers, surprise, and cunning. See 204–209 for Clausewitz's thoughts on the importance of concentrating military force in space and time.

[94] Clausewitz, 225.

[95] Clausewitz, 233–234 for the three elements of the "total concept of a victory;" 236 for the various objectives associated with offensive and defensive engagements; 240–241 for the three elements that comprise the "moment of decision" after which the battlefield situation is irretrievable for the losing side; 253 for the psychological effect of defeat and victory within opposing forces; 258 for five points related to the destruction of the enemy's forces, the primacy of large-scale engagements as leading to major success, and fighting as the means to destroy the enemy; 263–265 for notes on how to strategically exploit victory, to include employment of the pursuit; and 273–275 for notes on the utility and planning of night attacks, such as the famous Battle of Hochkirch, fought during the Seven Years War.

[96] Paret, "Clausewitz," 198. Also, *On War,* Book VI, "Defense," does include a chapter on "The People in Arms." See 479 for Clausewitz's observation that "war by means of popular uprisings is a phenomenon of the nineteenth century" and how "conventional barriers have been swept away" that previously contained the "elemental violence of war" as reflected in popular war; 480 for 5 conditions under which popular uprisings are effective; 481 for the recommendation that uprisings should be "nebulous and elusive;" 482 for the recommendation for regular force commanders to support uprisings with small detachments of regular troops; 482 also for the recommendation that irregular units avoid engaging in protracted defensive battles; and 483 for Clausewitz's thoughts on the outline of a guerilla-type campaign involving retreat of regular forces into remote areas, insurrection against the occupier, and eventual counterattack. See also Book VI, Chapter Thirty, 516–517 for digression on how history, in the end, does not provide firm grounds for true "principles, rules, or methods," and is best employed within an "exercise for judgment."

theoretical "absolute" war and war as it truly occurs, as well as the political nature of war and how politics and strategy interact with each other.[97] Clausewitz advises the reader that the French revolutionary wars and Napoleonic campaigns generated conditions aligned to "absolute war",[98] and that the political object of war ought to be understood before the beginning of any war:

> No one starts a war – or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter is its operational objective.[99]

Clausewitz also considers the variety of military history, from antiquity to his immediate past in the 1820s, and identifies how changing political arrangements and leadership behaviors, popular sentiment and passions, and variations of military formation and fighting tactics shaped the outward manifestation of the phenomenon of war.[100] Clausewitz observes how, for instance, the "wars of the cabinets," that is, war more or less in its form from 1648 until 1792 or so, waged by political leaders such as Frederick the Great effectively isolated those estates in society from the waging of war and the battlefield because of dynastic interests and the assumption that certain social groups have no military value at all.[101] However, Clausewitz observes, the French revolutionary wars reintroduced the popular will and passion of the people across the breadth of society and brought war

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97 Paret, "Clausewitz," 198.

98 Clausewitz, *On War*, 580.

99 Clausewitz, 579.

100 Clausewitz, 587–593 for the historical survey beginning with ancient Rome and ending with the French revolutionary wars and the Napoleonic campaigns. See 586 for discussion of ancient Rome; 587 for the transition to the medieval period; 588 for the wars of Louis XIV; 588–589 for the emergence of the standing European army during the time of Louis XIV and accompanying societal and economic and political developments that enabled the fielding of progressively larger armies; 589 for the separation of the conduct of war from the influence of the people during the transition from the 17th to 18th centuries; 590 for the relatively limited nature of the wars of leaders such as Frederick the Great in the 18th century; 591 for the transition of European norms of warfare from accepting plunder to generally rejecting the wholesale plunder of occupied lands; 592–593 for Clausewitz's observations on the transformation in the conduct of war that occurred when the popular energies of the French people channeled into the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars.

101 Clausewitz, 589–590.

close to its "absolute" state as could be.[102] Chapter Four, "Closer Definition of the Military Objective: The Defeat of the Enemy" of Book VIII briefly introduces the concept of the "center of gravity" as "the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."[103] The center of gravity, per Clausewitz, might be many things: an army, or an enemy capital, or perhaps the "community of interest" within an alliance, or even "the personalities of the leaders and their public opinion" within the context of a popular uprising.[104]

Book VIII concludes with a series of chapters that consider how to best apply military force in order to accomplish political objectives ranging from the total defeat of the enemy and his army in the mode of the Napoleonic offensive to more limited offensive and defensive operations.[105] Clausewitz observes that Clausewitz advises the reader that governments that request "*purely military advice*"[106] of their commanders do so foolishly, because

> No major proposal required for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors; and when people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not with its influence.[107]

With this analysis of the essential elements in Clausewitz's biography, one must turn to the impact of this theorist in the English-speaking world, to include in the U.S.,

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[102] Clausewitz, 590, 592–593.

[103] Clausewitz, 595–596; see also 617 for Clausewitz's analysis of how to "reduce the sources of enemy strength to a single center of gravity."

[104] Clausewitz, 596.

[105] Clausewitz, 603–604 for how limited political objectives – forcing concessions from the enemy, for instance – require more limited military means; 605 for how "the only source of war is politics – the intercourse of governments and peoples;" 606 for how policy converts war "into a mere instrument;" 611 for how limited offensive war might consist of occupying part of the territory of the enemy if total defeat of the enemy is not possible or desired; 614–615 for historical accounts of various defensive actions in 18th and 19th century Europe;

[106] Clausewitz, 607.

[107] Clausewitz, 607–608.

within the epoch of total war. This record includes a process of a misreading of Clausewitz in the English-speaking world, which says more about the reaction of British and American state and society to war in the 20th century than it might say, in fact, about the fundamentals of this theory and its capacity to influence contemporary action or not.

## B. CLAUSEWITZ: THE "MADHI OF MASS" AND HARBINGER OF "TOTAL WAR"

A dominant line of analysis in the period from 1919 until the recent past, especially within the English-speaking world, has been to use Clausewitz as a tool in a selective and often in a wholly faulty way to generalize about the changing face of war, and, more or often than not, to find fault in a variety of locales as pertain to state, armies, battle, and war itself. This school of thought, such as it is, often uses Clausewitz as a mirror to illustrate the author's assumptions about war and theory, as well as doctrine in a manner that duplicates many of the errors about such theory that Clausewitz so rightly criticized in his own time. One can say that within the reductionistic-extractive school encompasses the work and commentary of the First World War and inter-war British journalists and strategic theorists J.F.C. Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart. These two men, veterans of war on the western front, and figures in the interwar attempt to make sense of the phenomenon of total war in all its confusion, have had outsized impact in the U.S. on professional military education and the formation of doctrine until the present. When the Cold War ended a generation ago and war in many forms reasserted itself especially in the Middle East in the years from 1990 until 2003, the legacy of these two British officers and publicists was revived, even as tens of thousands of U.S. officers also read or misread Clausewitz.

This school underwent a renaissance of a sort in the 1990s as the Israeli Martin Van Creveld and the British John Keegan penned responses to Clausewitzian thought that channeled many of the sentiments of the two British soldiers of the World War and also of a British state and society that had been overwhelmed by war twice in a generation. Their respective arguments converge on several main points that often have little to do with the text of Clausewitz. Their body of work asserts that Clausewitzian theory and practice as found in German war since the 18th century is either directly or indirectly to blame for the expansion of war into total war. In an ahistorical manner, the critics contend that

Clausewitzian theory overemphasizes the role of the European nation-state in the direction and organization of violence and armed force; and that Clausewitz improperly rationalizes war, which is essentially irrational and originates within and is sometimes bounded by the innate desire for combat internal to all human culture and society.

### 1. J.F.C. Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart: Two Voices from the Trenches

One can begin with the impact of the First World War on British letters and also on the British military profession, which, unlike its fate in the years 1815–1914, emerged from the war deeply shaken along with so much else in British government and society where war had rebounded to Britain itself in a way that had not been seen for centuries.[108] J.F.C. Fuller and Basil Liddell Hart, both British Army First World War veterans, polemically asserted that Clausewitz was outdated and philosophically linked to modern industrialized warfare, even though technology does not really factor into his theory. With a misreading of the role of the British Army of the time as well as that of Field Marshall von Falkenhayn, Liddell Hart dubbed Clausewitz the "Madhi of Mass" and held him responsible for overemphasis on such huge battles as the Somme in 1916 that were devoid of political or strategic merit where British tactics produced no operational result.[109] In error, Fuller held that Clausewitz himself only possessed a "vague understanding" of Napoleonic warfare—despite having fought against the revolutionary French armies in the late 18th century. Clausewitz, furthermore, served during the French invasion of Prussia in 1805–6, and as part of the Prussian contingent in support of the Russian defensive-offensive effort during the French invasion, surely had a great comprehension of French armies in the epoch than did either British military journalist in the 1920s and 1930s.

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[108] See Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 12–13 for the enormous losses sustained by the British Army on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in July 1916; 21–23 for consideration of how literary style transformed from the pre-war era to the postwar, and inarguably modern, era; 315–316 for notes on Basil Liddell Hart's experience at the Battle of the Somme, where his 800-man battalion sustained over 700 casualties in a single day; and 317 for the deterioration of the British economy and gold reserve during the war.

[109] John Shy, "Jomini," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 196), 181.

Per Fuller's simplistic view which left out Moltke and Schlieffen, Clausewitz was responsible for the transmission of the "offensive principles of Napoleon" to the military landscape of the First and Second World Wars.[110] The countless victims of these two conflicts, Fuller maintained, were those casualties to the "apotheosis of violence" whose genesis resided in Clausewitzian dogma of battle in war.[111] Fuller contends that Clausewitzian thought as recorded in *On War* is thus: "concentrate as much as possible, act as swiftly as possible, conquer and destroy the enemy's armed force, get possession of the material elements of aggression…".[112] Such a statement is a caricature of Napoleon and Clausewitz in fact, but such misreading is the norm in this case.

### 2. War Transformed and War as Culture: The Van Creveld and Keegan Critiques

With the end of the Cold War and the rise of weapons of high accuracy and the instability that quickly showed itself in the Persian Gulf and former Yugoslavia, war reappeared despite the promise of an end of history. Military organization in the U.S. especially had grown greatly in size, and its professional military education establishment had reached a point in which it was a kind of perpetual motion machine eager for new ideas and new doctrine. One was told to make sense of the end of the Cold War and this reappearance of war—a reappearance that was not a reappearance at all when one considers the small war or lesser wars in the years 1945–1989. Simple answers were in demand, and two figures in particular were ready and able to provide these too facile readings of theory and war. These men were Martin Van Creveld and John Keegan, and they analyze Clausewitz via tendentious and polemical critiques that cannot stand careful inquiry.

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110 J.F.C. Fuller, *The Conduct of War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1961), 60. See also Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 34 for commentary on Clausewitz's combat experience in the initial wars of the French Revolution, 119 and 127 for the psychological impact of the Prussian defeat against Napoleon in 1806, 221–225 for Clausewitz's departure from Prussian service and attachment to the Russian army, and 249 for notes on his participation on the periphery of the Battle of Waterloo.

111 Fuller, 62.

112 Fuller, 68–71.

For instance, the Israeli's Van Creveld's *The Transformation of War* (1991) contended that guerilla war, terrorism, and the progressive decay of state-centric "Westphalian" political institutions has rendered the so-called "Clausewitzian Universe" increasingly irrelevant.[113] This assertion arose from Van Creveld's Israeli biography and also from a sound knowledge of war in Europe which, in the year 1991, seemed to be on the cusp of a new age. The British journalist and Sandhurst instructor John Keegan wrongly contends, by way of a puzzling causal chain, that Clausewitzian logic fails in face of the observed, historical, and global reality that war is fundamentally about irrational forces, a statement that is astonishing, when one sees that Clausewitz wrote about this fact in huge detail. Furthermore, taking a page from his seniors, Liddell Hart and Fuller, Keegan contends that Clausewitz is ultimately responsible for the excesses of modern industrialized warfare and bears "weighty responsibility" for the First World War in particular, despite the fact that Clausewitz died in 1831 at a time when industrialization was only beginning in Germany and this Englishman then manages to avoid any analysis of Moltke, Schlieffen, Ludendorff, or even Walter Rathenau.[114]

These theories orient on two specific aspects of On War that emerge early on in the work: Clausewitz's theory, as to so called real war versus war in theory, that war arises from politics, and his exploration of so called and widely misunderstood "second trinity" that exerts influence on government, military forces, and the people who comprise a particular community. Clausewitz states the following regarding the connection between war and politics and policy:

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[113] Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 41 for the thesis that Clausewitzian philosophy is rooted in a post-Peace of Westphalia state-centric world order, 20–22 for the introduction of the "low intensity conflict" paradigm, 58 for the contention that the "Clausewitzian Universe" is outdated as a conceptual framework, and 192 for the prognostication that low intensity conflict may well "destroy the state."

[114] John Keegan, *A History of Warfare* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1993), 3 for the initial critique of Clausewitz's approach towards war and policy; 21 for the causal linkages between Clausewitzian philosophy and industrialized warfare, 22 for the thesis that Clausewitz served as the "ideological father" of the First World War and that the mass suffering of that conflict "may be Clausewitz's enduring legacy." See also Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 2013), 61 and 169 for how Rathenau organized the First World War German industrial war effort; and Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, 130–132 for notes on the Schlieffen Plan, and 148–149 for how General Erich Lundendorff, as quartermaster-general within the General Staff, supported unsustainable offensive action during the second half of the First World War.

> When whole communities go to war—whole peoples, and especially *civilized* peoples—the reason always lies in some political situation, and the occasion is always due to some political object. War, therefore, is an act of policy. Were it a complete, untrammeled, absolute manifestation of violence (as the pure concept would require), war would of its own independent will usurp the place of policy the moment had brought it into being; it would then drive policy out of office and rule by the laws of its own nature…In reality war, as has been shown, is not like that. Its violence is not of the kind that explodes in a single discharge, but is the effect of forces that do not always develop in exactly the same manner or same degree.[115]

Van Creveld argues that the emergence of guerilla war, terrorism, and other forms of fighting not explicitly linked to established and recognized states and armed forces is progressively rendering Clausewitzian philosophy "out of date".[116] The Clausewitzian Universe, as presented in *On War*, consists of organized armies, modern states in the mode of government that emerged in Europe after the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, and a populace that is distinct from both the army and the state.[117] Governments typically wage war within the confines of the Clausewitzian Universe.[118] The chain of argument proceeds to consider the rise of "non-trinitarian war"—especially terrorism and guerilla war—that has occurred in the twentieth century, and contrasts this history with the precepts of the "Clausewitzian Universe".[119] Van Creveld proceeds to contend that *On War* is grounded in a fundamentally "rationalistic" and linearly-progressive "teleological" mode of thought with roots in the intellectual climate of Clausewitz's time and concurs with Basil Liddell

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115 Clausewitz, *On War*, Book I, Chapter 1, Part 23, page 87.

116 Van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*, 58.

117 Van Creveld, 41 for the roots of the thesis in Van Creveld's appreciation of post-Peace of Westphalia legal distinctions between governments, peoples, and armies.

118 Van Creveld, 49, for the contention that the Clausewitzian Universe "rests on the assumption that war is made predominately by states or, to be exact, by governments."

119 Van Creveld, 33 for the introduction of the "Clausewitzian Universe" construct; 35–42 for the extraction and development of the "trinitarian war" concept from *On War* and connection to the Clausewitzian Universe thesis; 20–21 for the association of "low intensity conflict" with non-trinitarian trend lines; 22 for commentary on the failure of counterinsurgency strategies as applied to guerilla war, 48–49 for notes on various attempts by modern states to wage trinitarian war in the Clausewitzian model, and 73 for how the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the West Bank serves as an example of non-trinitarian warfare.

Hart's thesis that the work is a sort of "Prussian Marseillaise which inflamed the body and intoxicated the mind" and served as a "clarion call for action" and battlefield brutality.[120]

*The Transformation of War* briefly cites various cases of medieval and ancient war-making that depart from the trinitarian construct introduced earlier in the work.[121] Van Creveld contends, for instance, that the distribution of political authority in the medieval world as such meant that authority to declare and wage war resided with religious authorities, not with the secularized arrangement held to exist in Clausewitzian trinitarian warfare—a gross misreading of how state and estate worked, say, in the Thirty Years War in Habsburg, where religious and secular members of the first and second estate had a say in war or where prince bishops reigned in central Europe and so on .[122] The argument proceeds to the conclusion that war-making has historically entered a realm where the perceived Clausewitzian distinction between war and rationalized state policy disappears:

> To sum up: Clausewitzian war as the continuation of policy only goes so far in explaining the historical facts. A very important form of conflict, namely war for existence [sic], fits into the framework with difficulty if at all; a war of this kind defies the laws of gravity, so to speak, causing cost-benefit calculations to be stood on their head. When this happens, strategic rationalist, far from assisting the attainment of victory, can be a prerequisite for defeat.[123]

Van Creveld girds his thesis that perceived trinitarian boundaries between the state that initiates war policies, the military that executes it, and the people that wage it have completely merged—a idea that may or may not stand up to scrutiny. He described the state of affairs in Israel during the 1967 Six Day War: "War is Israel, and Israel is War".[124]

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[120] Van Creveld, 64 for how *On War* is grounded in the "rationalistic" intellectual climate of the early 19th century; 65 for the citation of Liddell Hart's "Prussian Marseillaise" commentary.

[121] Van Creveld, 127–129 for notes on the medieval arrangement of war-making power; 131 for notes on the era of chivalry and moderating impact that the chivalric code, independent of the state, had on the conduct of warfare; 136 for additional notes on the historical right that religious authorities possessed to declare war, and 139 for holy war as an example of historical warfare that departs from the Clausewitzian trinitarian construct.

[122] Van Creveld, 136.

[123] Van Creveld, 148.

[124] Van Creveld, 145.

Subsequently, Van Creveld contends that Clausewitz never considers [sic] specifically "why men risk their lives," and cites cultural and individual motivations ranging from the "counting coup" that historically occurred in premodern societies, to the various motivations present amongst the combatants in the epic *Iliad*, and to the individual desire to seek danger and glory.[125] Van Creveld ends this chain of argument after identifying war as "sport" that is inherently interesting and divorced from higher-order attempts to rationalize.[126]

*The Transformation of War* applies the central argument regarding the progressive obsolescence of trinitarian warfare and the "Clausewitzian Universe" toward consideration of the future of warfare and the modern state. Predictions in the closing passages of the book range from the erroneous prognostication that low intensity conflict will progressively end modern states; that low intensity conflict may extend to the United States and feature the operation of organizations like the "Assassins" found in ancient warfare; and that modern states may dissolve into city-states and political arrangements similar to those found in medieval feudal times—a generation later this idea does not seem to have become a fact at all.[127] The final threads of the argument predict the end of state-level investment in military technology, the expansion of the private security industry, the employment of increasingly "small and cheap" military equipment items, and ultimately a

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[125] Van Creveld, 160–161 for digression on Clausewitz's avoidance of considering "why men risk their lives"; 162 for notes on the *Iliad*; 164 for the argument that danger is the "why," not the "Clausewitzian medium" present in warfare; 167 for "counting coup" as an example of war-making rationale that counters the precepts of trinitarian warfare; 191 for the thesis that "war is sport."

[126] Van Creveld, 191.

[127] Van Creveld, 192 for low intensity conflict and the destruction of the modern state; 194 for how terrorism can at best be contained; 195 for the argument that the state has "lost the monopoly" on violence; 195–197 for the wide-ranging prediction that the U.S. and other modern states may fall victim to organizations such as the "Assassins"; 197 for the final argument that "In the future, war will not be waged by armies but by groups whom we today call terrorists, guerillas, bandits, and robbers, but who will undoubtably hit on more formal titles to describe themselves…" and how lines of social and political authority will extend on a charismatic and even fanatical basis.

possible "restoration of the medieval situation."[128] Van Creveld concludes his work on the note that, in order to account for and understand "the occurrence of war, it is not necessary to postulate the existence of any ulterior motives other than war itself."[129] All of this sold books to the PME and doctrine establishment in the 1990s, but what such wild ideas have to do with the truth is another question altogether.

Van Creveld bases his argument on one primary thesis which crafts a straw-man version of perhaps the most important part of *On War:* the discussion of the trinity in Book I, in order to avoid the troublesome portions of *On War* which disprove the thesis that the "Clausewitzian Universe" exists as an increasingly irrelevant extension of the European world as it stood in 1648. The first main argument is that the emergence of combatants and battle that does not align with that seen during the era of both industrialized war in the middle of the 20th century and during the preceding century indicates that the essence of war itself has changed. Van Creveld mistakes the shift in the means of battle for a change in the nature of war itself, and indeed ignores the critical portion of *On War* that counters this point.

Clausewitz does not explain war itself in terms of the means of battle or particular tactics employed by combatants. War, as Clausewitz explains within Book I of *On War*, consists of the dynamic interplay and influence between primordial violence and anger, battlefield chance and uncertainty amidst friction, and the realm of politics and policy. This complex interaction generates and modulates how war manifests in the real world, and also how close it approximates the "total war" as conceived in theory by Clausewitz. Van Creveld, it seems, prefers to interpret the Clausewitzian trinity as the "second trinity" consisting of the people, army, and government, to the deliberate exclusion of the true heart of Clausewitz's complex argument. *The Transformation of War* is perhaps best read as a

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[128] Van Creveld, 205 and 207 for notes on the predicted end of substantial state-level investment in military technology research, development, and fielding; 207 on the likely expansion of the private security industry; 210 on the likely increase in use of small and inexpensive military "gadgets" on the battlefield; 216 for the argument on the possible return of medieval-style political arrangements.

[129] Van Creveld, 220. Also see 221 for the observation that warfare is the goal and end waged by men in itself in a world where "women like those men who are prepared to fight on their behalf" and 226 for the repetition of the thesis that the world is trending towards a "pre 1648" state of affairs.

cautionary tale of how one specific nation's military experience marked by victory along lines generally recognized as conventional transformed after contact with the popular energy and passion induced during such events as the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and 1982 Lebanon invasion. One has also to say that the book in the year 2021 has itself become an artifact of another era, i.e., the end of the Cold War and the pivotal period between 1990 and 2001. This epoch was characterized by a military realignment amid a revival of war and a search for new roles and missions that made this work appealing to stake holders in theory, doctrine and order of battle who had to assert their continuing worth amid budget cutbacks and the perpetual confusion about the changing character of war in detail versus its essence.

The instructor in Sandhurst, the British figure John Keegan issued a polemical warning to those who delve into Clausewitzian philosophy and *On War*:

> In the practice of war making, it is to the principles of Clausewitz that the statesman and the supreme commander still turn; in the truthful description of war, however, the eye-witness and the historian must flee from Clausewitz's methods, despite the fact that Clausewitz himself was both an eye-witness and a historian of war who must have seen and could have written of a great deal that found no place in his theories.[130]

Keegan contended that the Clausewitzian maxim, extracted from *On War*, that "war is the continuation of policy by other means"[131] fails against consideration of the observed historical record that reveals that warfare fundamentally involves forces that operate outside the rationalized state-centric processes that he deems to be inherent to Clausewitzian philosophy. "War," Keegan posits in a bold, yet nebulous fashion, "embraces much more than politics: that it is always an expression of culture, often a determinant of cultural forms, in some societies the culture itself."[132] Moreover, Keegan sites Clausewitzian philosophy as rooted in the regimental culture endemic in Prussia in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries—a culture that emphasized "total

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[130] John Keegan, A History of Warfare, 6.

[131] Keegan, 3.

[132] Keegan, 12.

obedience, single-minded courage, self-sacrifice" and "honor".[133] Clausewitz, Keegan argues, proceeded to embed these regimental values into his political philosophy.[134] The acerbic argument in *A History of Warfare* proceeds to identify Clausewitz as the "ideological father" of the First World War, since the ideology of "true war" transmitted from Clausewitzian philosophy and has as a legacy the "appalling fate" of First World War armies.[135]

Keegan develops his argument that factors which are culturally-rooted and external to the state-centric Clausewitzian conception of war as continuation of policy by describing how other, non-European, societies waged war: "Good historian though he was, Clausewitz allowed two institutions—state and regiment—that circumscribed his own perception of the world to dominate his thinking so narrowly that he denied himself the room the observe how different war might be in societies where state and regiment were alien concepts."[136] Keegan initially considers the Polynesian society that settled Easter Island, and concludes that that society pursued total war towards its own annihilation: "War, when it came in a 'true' form to that corner of Polynesia called Easter Island, proved to be a termination first of politics, then of culture, ultimately almost of life itself."[137]

The argument proceeds to consider the African Zulu culture as it developed in the nineteenth century, and posits that the Zulu leader Shaka "was a perfect Clausewitzian" who structured a military organization in order to secure his tribal culture with "dramatic

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[133] Keegan, 16.

[134] Keegan, 18.

[135] Keegan, 21 for the argument that the fighting which occurred during the First World War was ultimately devoid of any discernable political, military, or social purpose and was ultimately "war for war's sake"; also see 21 for Keegan's thesis that Clausewitz bore responsibility for the excesses of the First World War much as Karl Marx, while removed from the actual Communist revolutions and "revolutionary impulse" of the later 19th and early 20th centuries, bore responsibility; 22 for the thesis that Clausewitz was the "ideological father" of the First World War.

[136] Keegan, 23.

[137] Keegan, 28. See also 26 for how the Easter Islanders "taught themselves the full logic of Clausewitzian warfare by bloody experience" and attempted "Clausewitzian warfare's crowning act, the decisive battle." See 27 for how Clausewitzian warfare proved to be a "recipe for destruction" of European culture, just as it did for the Easter Islanders.

efficiency" that eventually disintegrated the Zulu nation.[138] Keegan proceeds to appreciate how the Mameluke slave soldiers found in many Muslim-majority states in premodern and early modern times operated within a military system and culture that secured and perpetuated societal hierarchies at the cost of military efficiency.[139] Analysis of the Tokugawa-era Japanese samurai warrior culture concludes Keegan's cultural historical survey and concludes on the note that the case of the longevity and decline of the Japanese samurai lends weight to the thesis that "war may be, among many other things, the perpetuation of a culture by its own means."[140]

Keegan ambitiously concludes his cultural study on the argument that, ultimately, Clausewitz sidelined cultural considerations when developing his philosophy of war:

> Clausewitz did seem to perceive politics as an autonomous activity, the meeting-place of rational forms and emotional forces, in which reason and feeling are determinants but in which culture – that great cargo of shared beliefs, values, associations, myths, taboos, imperatives, customs, traditions, manners, and ways of thought, speech and artistic expression which ballast every society – plays no determining role.[141]

*A History of Warfare* concludes on the argument that culture determines the nature of war and that "wisdom" is to be had in refusal to site politics and war "within the same continuum," lest societies risk the fate of those who, like the Easter Islanders, pursued true war to the end.[142]

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[138] Keegan, 32. See 28–32 for Keegan's historical account of how Shaka Zulu cast aside tribal-cultural restraints on war-making, to include killing women and children, and instituted tactical changes to his formations, such as the use of more advanced bladed weapons and more lethal and maneuverable close-order formations. See 31–32 for the failure of Zulu military culture to adapt to the introduction of firearms in their region.

[139] Keegan, 32.

[140] Keegan, 46. See also 42–43 for the culturally-sited origins of the samurai drive to manage warfare within Japan; 43–44 for social-cultural foundations of the restriction on import, construction, and use of firearms and gunpowder weapons within Japan during samurai rule, and 45 for why restrictions on gunpowder aligned with cultural mores regarding the superiority of the samurai sword manual of arms and warrior code.

[141] Keegan, 46.

[142] Keegan, 392. See also 387–388 for Keegan's citation of the history of development of war in Asia as evidence for the thesis that the Chinese way of battle was marked by moderation in the interest of reserving "cultural forms, rather than serve imperatives of foreign conquest or internal revolution."

In a manner that says more about how certain British military figures over generalize from a record that may bear on the issue or not, Keegan's argument crafts a Clausewitzian straw-man similar to that found in *The Transformation of War*. His core analytical construct of "culture" identified above—"that great cargo of shared beliefs, values, associations, myths, taboos, imperatives, customs, traditions, manners, and ways of though, speech, and artistic expression which ballast every society"—is so broad that it defies systematic refutation and Clausewitz surely is aware of these forces in his theory and well embraces him despite the Sandhurst instructor's statement to the contrary. Keegan's thesis is rooted in several other propositions which extract and distort a few parts of Clausewitz's thought, and *On War* in particular. Keegan casts Prussian military culture at the time of Clausewitz in a mold that is ahistorical and betrays Keegan's own failing as a scholar of war in Europe, as Paret's *Clausewitz and the State*'s account of the inner Prussian reform movement indicates.[143]

Keegan also argues that Clausewitzian thought is excessively "state-centric," presumably in the sense of the European state as it stood in the early 19th century, and therefore inapplicable to other societies and peoples who might live within a different sort of community.[144] Clausewitz does indeed identify "government" as corresponding to one point of the trinity—"its element of subordination, as an instrument of policy, which makes it subject to reason alone"[145]—identified in Book I, he never at any point in the book outlines the real or theoretical form in which a state, government, or political organization might take. War consists of the complex and ultimately unpredictable interplay of organized violence, chance, and politics and policy, and Clausewitz never claimed to develop a theory of war that could predict or explain how battle and fighting might occur

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[143] See Paret, *Clausewitz and the State*, 157 for Clausewitz's appreciation of the philosopher Immanuel Kant's critique of the "rationalist view of the world," see also 137–139 for detailed notes on the goals of the Prussian military reformers, which included loosening the social restrictions which had privileged the nobility within the officer corps and also which emphasized developed "trained, committed, and thinking" soldiers.

[144] Keegan, 5, 23.

[145] Clausewitz, *On War*, 89.

at various points in history.[146] Keegan begins *A History of Warfare* by recounting his formative experience at the British Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst and his observations regarding the stratified culture of the instructor cadre at that school as demarcated by military badges, traditions, and uniforms—perhaps this rarified environment, in the end, shaped Keegan's thought as much as command and staff experience in the Prussian and Russian armies during the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars influenced Carl von Clausewitz.

## C. CLAUSEWITZ IN AMERICA, THE CENTER OF GRAVITY, AND STRATEGY AFTER DEFEAT

The U.S. military went in the period from 1900 to 1960 from being a minor force in world affairs to a dominant one, a process that proceeded with great speed but also a procedure that did not have a single unifying theory of war in the sense of German idealism. Itself a fairly new phenomenon, U.S. strategic thought, after the end of the Second World War, struggled to comprehend and respond to several phenomena well embodied in Clausewitz's thought. The first was the apparent world conflict of ideology in the grey zone of two political systems in struggle on a global scale. Added to this fact was the prospect of atomic and thermonuclear war and the attendant involvement of extreme violence,

[146] Clausewitz, 593 for the observation that, with regard to the historical survey detailed in 586–593, that "We wanted to show how every age had its own kind of war, its own limiting conditions, and its own peculiar preconceptions. Each period, therefore, would have held to its own theory of war, even if the urge had always and universally existed to work things out on scientific principles."

chance, will, and annihilation of armies and societies.[147] At the same time, such experiences as the conflict in Korea in 1950–1953 seemed to defy theory with a new kind of so called "limited war." The late 1950s Single Integrated Operational Plan 62 (SIOP 62), for instance, well captures the scale of the destruction envisioned within U.S. strategic planning circles during the early Cold War.[148] U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force strategists, in particular, grew to believe that strategy amounted to the development, acquisition, and employment of strategic aerospace weapons and the destruction of associated target lists, themselves developed to a scale which required progressively more assigned warheads,

[147] Lawrence Freedman, "The First Two Generations of Nuclear Strategists," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 737 for the impact of the Berlin Crisis in 1948 and the development of U.S. atomic war plans; 739 for the transition of the U.S. defense industrial establishment to the mass production of atomic weapons in the 1950s, 740–741 for the genesis of the Eisenhower "massive retaliation" strategy; 744 for the integration of nuclear weapons into NATO strategy during the "New Look" time period; 746–748 for how U.S. and NATO leaders and planners grappled with the distinction between "tactical" and "strategic" nuclear weapons in the 1950s; 752–753 for the emergence of concepts such as "first strike" and "second strike" capabilities as conceptualized by Albert Wohlstetter; 754 for the Kennedy administration desire to stabilize development of nuclear weapons and war plans; 757–758 for Secretary of Defense McNamara's conceptualization of "Mutual Assured Destruction;" 760–761 for the transition between the focus on arms control in the 1970s to the Reagan administration Strategic Defense Initiative and renewed focus on fighting and winning nuclear war; 763–764 for the strategic differences between Herman Kahn's "dominate" approach to nuclear war and Thomas Schelling's "deter" approach to nuclear war; 772 for the adoption of the "flexible response" option within NATO strategy in 1967 that accepted that conventional war in Europe need not trigger a nuclear response; 775 for the U.S. nuclear strategy of "escalation dominance" and focus on "selective nuclear options" within an overall theoretical framework that assumed some sort of staggered approach towards nuclear war.

[148] Fred Kaplan, *The Wizards of Armageddon* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1983), 269–270 for details on the initial brief of SIOP-62 to Secretary of Defense McNamara. SIOP-62 entailed the detonation of 3,423 nuclear warheads totaling 7,847 megatons of destructive power and the estimated death of 285 million people within Russia and China. SIOP-62 made little distinction between states within the "Sino-Soviet bloc," and covered targets in China, for instance, because they were in the path of U.S. strategic bomber routes into Russia. See also , for the observation that the mode of attack within SIOP-62 is best described as a "spasm" that made no attempt to tailor the nuclear offensive to the specific nation within the Sino-Soviet bloc actually involved in the crisis at hand.

and the personnel, aircraft, submarines, and missiles needed to destroy them.[149] Ultimately, the logic that strategy equaled technology that in turn delivered unbound nuclear annihilation collapsed any rational political purpose as related in *On War* and Clausewitz's use of the trinity analogy to capture the interplay of violence and anger, chance, and political reason.

The second challenge to U.S. strategic logic was the growing frequency of anti-colonial and irregular or small warfare in Southeast Asia, Latin America, and Africa. U.S. strategy shifted from solely focusing on nuclear war and nuclear deterrence to the challenge of waging counterinsurgency campaigns amongst the people and against political cadres dedicated to mobilizing popular support, violently seizing state power, and annihilating the legacy political order.[150] President Kennedy's "Flexible Response" strategy marked an attempt to channel some of the colonial warfare practices of the French and the British in order to meet and defeat war akin to that waged by the Algerian FLN against the French colonial administration, and, most prominently, the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.[151]

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[149] See Kaplan, *Wizards of Armageddon*, 266, for the argument that military-bureaucratic competition drover the inflation of the National Strike Target List (NSTL) and the Headquarters, Strategic Air Command, History and Research Division *History of the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff: Background and Preparation of SIOP-62*, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/nukevault/ebb236/index.htm, pages 18–19 for additional notes on the initiation and consolidation of the NSTL. See the following for the endorsement of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding the "optimum mix" targeting plan which included cities, military installations, and industry into nuclear war planning: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC, *Appraisal of Relative Merits, from the Point of View of Effective Deterrence, of Alternative Retaliatory Efforts* (The Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 19, 1960), page 3, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB130/SIOP-4.pdf.

[150] John Shy and Thomas W. Collier, "Revolutionary War," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 817 for the definition of "revolutionary war" as "the seizure of political power by the use of armed force," 839 for Maoist theory about revolutionary war involving the mobilization of mass political support amongst the people, and the importance of "protracted struggle" and leveraging geographical space and time against initially superior state forces; 841 for Mao's belief in the importance of revolutionary base areas; 845 for the fall of the Chinese Nationalist regime in 1949 and triumph of Mao's Chinese Communists; 847–849 for the growth of Ho Chi Minh's Vietnamese communist movement and eventual victory in French Indochina in 1954; 852–853 for French perspectives on revolutionary warfare; 854 for British revolutionary warfare practices in Malaya; and 854–855 for an overview of failed U.S. attempts to respond to revolutionary war in Vietnam via civilian agency air projects and conventional and special forces operations.

[151] Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, 152, and 180–185 for the institutional reaction of the U.S. Army to internal voices raising concern over preparedness to fight in a low-intensity war similar to that which had occurred in Algeria and French Indochina. See also Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War*, 211.

The U.S. withdrew, defeated, from Vietnam in 1975. Thinking about, planning for, and practicing for large scale warfare reassumed pride of place within the U.S. military after a nearly nonexistent period of reflection on the lessons of Vietnam. The U.S. Army in the form of Colonel Harry Summers, for instance, rapidly distanced itself from the memory of Vietnam, commissioned a private think tank to conduct an after-action report that was quickly shelved, and transitioned to the welcome focus on the need to fight on land in Europe after the 1973 October war showed the changing face of tactics and operations in the Soviet school of war.[152] As this process operated in the 1970s, persons in war colleges and think tanks in the latter half of the decade found Clausewitz and On War. The process of the incorporation of Clausewitz and *On War* illuminates the reductionistic-extractive approach and the historic-contextual approach as they have manifested within the U.S. military-intellectual establishment. That is, the story of the reading and interpretation of the text expresses the spirit of the time dominated by an imperative of professional soldiers to shift the blame for defeat in Vietnam to civilians and to use Clausewitz as a vehicle to do so, while, at the same time, upholding the sanctity of the military profession based on the canon of classic thought by soldiers, such as Clausewitz, about war. Civilians had had too great a say in matters of war, and the outcome in Vietnam was the result.[153]

### 1. Clausewitz and the Response to Vietnam, the COG, and the OODA Loop

U.S. military officers now encountered the thought of Carl von Clausewitz amid U.S. military doctrine taught in professional military education from the tactical level to the highest echelons of defense and military strategy in the war colleges and beyond. Christopher Bassford, a former Marine and faculty member of the Marine Corps University and National War College, notes that there is no evidence that any U.S. military thinker

[152] Linn, 193, 201.

[153] Linn, 194–195.

read or had access to *On War* before the 1890s.[154] U.S. military officers did have intermittent exposure to Clausewitz in the early twentieth century, and President Eisenhower and General George Patton displayed interest in Clausewitz on an individual level but one struggles to know what this fact means in the waging of the second and Cold War.[155] With a re emphasis on military classics and the prospect of further conflict with the USSR as the Warsaw Pact modernized and expanded its order of battle, the U.S. military educational and doctrinal establishment notably turned towards *On War* after the withdrawal and defeat in Vietnam, as seen in the adoption of the newly published Paret translation by the National War College, Air War College, and Army War College between 1976 and 1981.[156]

U.S. military thought enthusiastically embraced Clausewitz in the wake of the defeat in Vietnam. Colonel Summers' *On Strategy* well summarizes the interest and line of inquiry via which U.S. military thinkers approached Clausewitz. Summers applies various Clausewitzian maxims to analyze the performance and defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam.[157] He arrives at a number of conclusions as overlaid against the historical record and U.S. Army list of the "principles of war" at the time.[158] Summers, for instance, argues that U.S. strategy failed to properly identify and attack the enemy "center of gravity" during

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154 Christopher Bassford, "Clausewitz in America Today," in *Clausewitz Goes Global: Carl von Clausewitz in the 21st Century* (Berlin: Miles-Verlag, 2011), 342.

155 Bassford, 342.

156 Bassford, 342.

157 Harry Summers, *On Strategy,* 5–7; also 19 for how failure of U.S. leadership to invoke the "national will" aligned with Clausewitzian thought on defeat in war; 35 for how the "cold-blooded" processes of defense systems analysis excluded Clausewitzian consideration of the "true nature of war," 44 for how the U.S. civilian-led defense planning and strategy effort did well in respect to "preparing for war" – Summers, citing Clausewitz, contends that this is but one side of the activity of war which also consists of actually waging war.

158 Summers, 95 for consideration of the U.S. record in Vietnam against the requirements of the "objective" principle of war and Clausewitzian thought; 108–110 for reflection on how well U.S. performance satisfied requirements of the "offensive"; 128–129 for integration of analysis of the North Vietnamese center of gravity into consideration regarding U.S. adherence to the principles of "mass, economy of force, and maneuver," 147 for how "unity of command" was generally absent from planning in Washington and in the Vietnam theater, and 151–157 for how the U.S. attained varying levels of "surprise" despite generally poor levels of "security."

the war, which Summers contends could have been the North Vietnamese Army positioned within North Vietnam, or Hanoi, or somehow the "community of interest" between North Vietnam, the Soviet Union, and China.[159] Some of his observations orient on the conflation of tactical success and operations as on display in counterinsurgency doctrine at the time, and his approach is fairly critical of counterinsurgency doctrine.[160] The real crux of his argument is that misalignment between the three points of the Clausewitzian "trinity," — which he defines as the American people, government, and military—led to the defeat of U.S. arms in Vietnam.[161] This willful use of the so called "trinity" as the essence of Clausewitz is a selective reading of Clausewitz, since Clausewitz associates the people, army, and government with the "first trinity" of primordial violence and anger, chance, and subordination to policy. This fact gets lost in the process, in which professional soldiers are at pains to demonstrate that the elite control of policy and strategy must always be in the hands of soldiers, not civilians.

Today, U.S. military students typically encounter Clausewitzian thought via the various professional military education (PME) programs which introduce concepts such as

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[159] Summers, 128–130.

[160] Summers, 73 and 77 for how U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine assumed dogmatic status within the U.S. defense establishment, partially via the association with in-vogue academic-social science theories; 78 for how counterinsurgency doctrine obscured the "true nature" of military force.

[161] Summers, 5–7.

the "center of gravity" (COG) [162] and "friction".[163] U.S. students who conduct follow-on research into how the U.S. defense intellectual community has considered the center of gravity will discover that scholars and commentators have proceeded to refine and apply Clausewitzian thought in order to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of adversaries across a number of analytical categories. Joe Strange, for instance, identifies the array of sometimes contradictory definition of the center of gravity concept within U.S. military doctrine and proposed a refined construct that considers adversarial missions and that critical source of strength—the "center of gravity"—needed to accomplish it, "critical

[162] See Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Newport: Naval War College, 2009), VII-13 to VII-14 for the introduction of the "center of gravity" as "as source of massed strength – physical or moral – or a source of leverage whose serious degradation, dislocation, neutralization, or destruction would have the most *decisive impact* on the enemy's or one's own ability to accomplish a given political/military objective." Also, see Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operational Planning* JP 5-0 (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 2020) IV-22 for the identification and subsequent analysis of the center of gravity as "the source of power or strength that enables a military force to achieve its objective and is what an opposing force can orient its actions against that will lead to enemy failure." See also U.S. Marine Corps, *Warfighting* MCDP-1 (Washington, DC: U.S. Marine Corps, 1997), 46, for discussion of the center of gravity as factors critical to the enemy which might consist of resolve, morale, armored forces, or aviation strength, or perhaps critical terrain or relationships between components of an enemy combat system: "In short, centers of gravity are any important sources of strength. If they are friendly centers of gravity, we want to protect them, and if they are enemy centers of gravity, we want to take them away."

[163] See U.S. Marine Corps, *Warfighting*, MCDP 1-0, 5–6 for discussion of "friction" as "the force that resists all action and saps energy. It makes the simple difficult and the difficult seemingly impossible." See also Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Newport: Naval War College, 2009), III-34 for how "Clausewitzian friction and the 'fog of war' is an inherent feature of warfare at any level" and III-35 for discussion of how "Friction is the main reason a military action differs in its execution from the one planned…the principle causes of friction are the enemy's plans, human errors, fatigue, terrain, weather, inadequate or inaccurate information, and pure luck and chance.

requirements" aligned to accomplish that mission, and the "critical vulnerabilities" associated with those requirements.[164]

John Boyd, an Air Force fighter pilot and Pentagon staff officer involved in aircraft design, delivered his "Pattern of Conflicts" brief to Marine Corps officer students in Quantico and contributed to the intellectual foundation of the Marine Corps "maneuver warfare" approach to fighting that channeled both Clausewitzian maxims and some of the dictums of Sun Tzu via the "Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA)" doctrine.[165] Boyd favored Sun Tzuian military philosophy over Clausewitz, and critiqued Clausewitzian thought for two primary reasons: he contended that Clausewitz oriented excessively on the need for "decisive battle" and on "exhausting the enemy" via attrition-style warfare emphasizing force-on-force warfare and incremental degradation of enemy combat formations.[166]

"Patterns of Conflict" oriented on Clausewitz's description of the "center of gravity" and posited that the logical progression of thought aimed at countering and

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164 Joe Strange, *Centers of Gravity and Critical Vulnerabilities: Building on the Clausewitzian Foundation So That We Can All Speak The Same Language* (Quantico: Marine Corps University, 1996), 38, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA502026 for the observation that U.S. doctrine has generated a "smorgasbord" of varying understandings revolving around the center of gravity concept; 43 for the thesis that the U.S. defense community should adopt an analytical construct that considers enemy strengths, mission, and weaknesses within the lens of the center of gravity, critical capabilities aligned to support that center of gravity, critical requirements enabling those capabilities, and targetable critical vulnerabilities to be selected and considered during the military planning process; 44 for the identification of "moral and political" centers of gravity; 57-63 for the analysis of U.S. Pacific Fleet centers of gravity and associated critical capabilities and requirements during the Second World War; 64 for the argument that any "critical vulnerability" is best determined by analyzing critical requirements; 74 for the admonition that "a center of gravity cannot also be a critical vulnerability;" and 76 for the assertion that a critical vulnerability "is the thing which makes a center of gravity vulnerable." See also 87 for the observation that, while important, terrain and meteorological features do not qualify as centers of gravity, and 93-94 for Strange's critique of the approach taken towards the "center of gravity" resident within U.S. service doctrine in the mid-1990s.

165 See Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War,* 376–379 for the initial presentation of "Patterns of Conflict" to U.S. Marine students in Quantico in 1980; 381 on the integration of Boyd's briefings with Michael Wyly's focus on German-inspired tactics; and 391 for the association of Boyd with the genesis of the precursor to MCDP-1 *Warfighting*: Fleet Marine Force Manual-1, *Warfighting*. Also, see MCDP-1 *Warfighting*, 102, footnote 18 for reference to Boyd's observe-orient-decide-act (OODA) decision making model and how rapid cycling of the model facilitates tempo and advantage in combat.

166 Coram, *Boyd*, 330–334 for notes on Boyd's thoughts on Clausewitzian philosophy, see also Hammond, *The Mind of War*, 129–130 for notes on Boyd's reduction of Clausewitzian thought to "decisive battle" and "attrition"; see also 153 for notes on the evolution of the maneuver and attrition lens of analysis.

destroying any adversary center of gravity would terminate in pitting strength against strength.[167] "Patterns of Conflict" also contested the perceived linear and rational approach towards warfare and state policy within *On War*.[168] Additionally, Boyd argued within his Patterns of Conflict brief that Clausewitz oriented excessively on a culminating "decisive battle" and "method and routine at the tactical level."[169] Clausewitzian philosophy as applied to the battlefield, Boyd ultimately contended, results in a "bloodbath".[170]

The line of argument here is similar to that seen within the Fuller, Keegan and Van Creveld critiques, misrepresents the line of argument and thought as actually resident within *On War*, and perhaps seeks to reinforce and advertise the "OODA" heuristic by means of a Clausewitzian straw man reduced to a few bulletized dictums relayed via slide show. Boyd's analysis—in the vein of Liddell Hart, Fuller, Van Creveld, and Keegan—sidelines Clausewitz's true trinity and misrepresents the complex relationship that Clausewitz posited exists between the political activity of any community and organized violence.

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[167] Ian Brown, *A New Conception of War: John Boyd, the U. S. Marines, and Maneuver Warfare* (Quantico, Marine Corps University Press, 2018), https://www.usmcu.edu/Portals/218/ANewConceptionOfWar.pdf?ver=2018-11-08-094859-167, 222–223 for Boyd's argument that, per Clausewitzian logic, the center of gravity is "where mass concentrates most densely, then you go after that, then you've got strength against strength. That's where the mass is concentrated most densely…his whole concept of center of gravity…he's wrong." See also 216 for slide notes from the "Patterns of Conflict" brief that contend that "Clausewitz did not see that many noncooperative, or conflicting, centers of gravity paralyze an adversary by denying him the opportunity to operate in a directed fashion…hence they impede vigorous activity and magnify friction."

[168] Brown, 209.

[169] Brown, 211.

[170] Brown, 216.

# III. GERMAN WARFARE, THE U.S. ARMY, AND WAR IN EUROPE

American engagement with European military thought as reflected in the interest in German wartime operations, tactics, and campaign histories has generally unfolded in the context of the historical relationship between American and European militaries. American interest in war in Europe has typically confined itself to interest in the *conduct of war*—tactics, operational history, and "how to fight" curricula—and not inquiry into or appreciation of the political, social, cultural, and economic roots of war. U.S. interest in the history of war in Europe also intersects with the ebb and flow of American involvement in the security affairs of the continent. Specifically, the imperative to fight wars in Europe has prompted an urgent search for answers about how to best fight on the continent. The historical record indicates that Americans are most interested in reducing the story of war in Europe to those key points seemingly best related to the perceived strategic, operational, and tactical challenges at hand.

The story of how U.S. military planners and historians interacted with the legacy of German arms and total war in Europe in the wake of the Second World War illustrates this point. Deteriorating relations between the U.S. and Soviet Union prompted U.S. military planners to draft a series of emergency war plans that progressed to require that U.S. ground forces in Europe be prepared wage defensive battle against numerically superior Soviet conventional forces whilst the U.S. Strategic Air Command carried out an atomic bombing campaign. U.S. Army planners, therefore, were inclined to seek solutions to the land defense problem from *Wehrmacht* officers cooperating with U.S. Army historians. The select lessons transmitted from these captured officers, who had their own agenda within the context of postwar Germany, helped shift the U.S. Army to orient on "mobile defense" as the solution to the land defense problem in Europe.

The reality of German warfare diverges substantially from the myth. Gerhard Gross argues as such in *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare* and contends that the historical record indicates that the Second World War German operational approach towards warfare aligned with the historical approach of past German operational planners: namely, that

German planners sought to solve strategic problems via rapid offensive action that, in the end, was unsustainable. Mark Mazower's *Hitler's Empire* illuminates the murderous impact of racialized National Socialist policies in Central Europe and highlights the savage and ultimately self-defeating nature of German activity as manifested in operationalized plunder, ersatz diplomacy, and unprecedented atrocity. Additional scholars also examine the history of the Soviet war effort, and thoroughly undermine the "Myth of the Eastern Front" belief that the Soviets overcame the *Wehrmacht* via mass and materiel alone.

## A. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE U.S. AS A EUROPEAN MILITARY POWER

The European roots of U.S. military thought precede the formation of the modern American republic. In the period prior to 1781, European officers mentored and instructed the revolutionary Continental Army during in the mode of the armies of the dynastic and absolutist powers that reigned in continental Europe during the American Revolution.[171] The Continental Army, though modelled and employed in combat in a fashion similar to that observed on the European battlefield, transitioned to a militia-type organization more akin to that seen in medieval and early modern times in Britain and Europe.[172] European, and specifically French, military thought transmitted as the curricula of French artillery and military engineering girded the intellectual foundations of the new U.S. Military Academy in the early 1800s.[173] West Point, and the U.S. Army, awarded pride of place to the military engineers trained in the French school of fortification, artillery, and military engineering.[174] Linn contends that the U.S. Army experience in the Mexican-American

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171 Abenheim and Halladay, *Soldiers, War, Knowledge, and Citizenship: German-American Essays on Civil Military Relations* 100–101.

172 Abenheim and Halladay, 101.

173 Abenheim and Halladay, 102.

174 Abenheim and Halladay, 102–103. See also Linn, *The Echo of Battle*, 12–13 for the involvement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the "intellectual and technical elite," in the Fortification Board which formed in the wake of the War of 1812, which oriented on continental defense via scientific-technical principles best grasped by a military elite.

war of 1846–1848 confirmed existent biases towards technical training and the imperative that citizen-soldiers be led by the West Point-produced elite.[175]

U.S. officers once again looked to war in Europe during the Crimean War in the 1850s, and a team of U.S. Army officers travelled to Crimea in order to study the conflict.[176] U.S. Army engineers cited the reduction of fortified defenses under artillery fire and the seizure of Russian-held Sevastopol as evidence to support the thesis that the U.S. Congress should fully fund an ambitious coastal fortification system.[177] The mode of interaction that saw U.S. interest orient on Europe reversed during the Civil War years, and European observers, as Abenheim and Halladay contend, for reasons of class and simple bigotry generally dismissed the policy and performance of the Union as it unfolded, even as the final combat in the 1870–1871 Franco-Prussian War transitioned to irregular warfare in the Paris Commune.[178] The figures Captain Alfred Mahan and Emory Upton generated the military thought that interpreted British and Prussian military experience as suitable for application to growing U.S. appetites for imperial expansion.[179]

The U.S. was a "European power" prior to 1917 by virtue of the aforementioned interest in and absorption of European military thought via tactical observation, appreciation of European military thought, and direct importation of European military curricula. The American Expeditionary Force initially lacked the command experience and training necessary to meet the requirements of the Western Front, trained under the tutelage of the French Army, and eventually integrated into the French-British line.[180] U.S. troops fought in and occupied European territory until 1923 and then withdrew in the aftermath of the U.S. Senate veto of League of Nations membership and the growing isolationism on

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175 Linn, The Echo of Battle, 21–22.

176 Abenheim and Halladay, 103.

177 Linn, 24–25.

178 Abenheim and Halladay, 103–104.

179 Abenheim and Halladay, 104.

180 Abenheim and Halladay, 106.

the American domestic front.[181] The American G.I. returned to Europe in 1944, advanced to Berlin in 1945, and remained as a type of occupier foreign to the experience of the shattered continent and, in particular, occupied Germany.[182]

## B. 1945-1950: U.S. EMERGENCY WAR PLANS AND DEFENSE ON LAND IN EUROPE

The U.S. presence in Europe at the end of the Second World War initially retracted and demobilized in a rapid fashion similar to that seen during 1918–1923. This aligned with the global demobilization of the vast American defense establishment as in times past. The U.S. Army, worldwide, numbered 5,984,114 soldiers in June 1945 and swiftly demobilized to 683,837 soldiers as of June 1947.[183] The U.S. Army ground force consisted of 91 divisions in August 1945 and drew down to a total of ten divisions in June 1947, all of which were dedicated to occupation duties in primarily Europe and Japan.[184] U.S. military planners concluded that American arms could only defend the Western Hemisphere, conduct postwar occupation duties, and conduct "minor overseas operations" if needed.[185]

U.S. planners, however, would soon orient on the looming Soviet threat in the wake of the 1948 Berlin Blockade and allied airlift, the communist-backed coup in Czechoslovakia, the collapse and flight of the Chinese Nationalists to Taiwan in 1949, and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 as evidence to support the imperative that U.S.

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[181] Abenheim and Halladay, 108.

[182] Abenheim and Halladay, 114–115.

[183] James F. Schnabel, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume I 1945–1947* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), 109, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Policy/Policy_V001.pdf.

[184] Kenneth W. Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Volume II 1947–1949* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), 11, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Policy/Policy_V002.pdf.

[185] David Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," *The Journal of American History (Bloomington, Ind.)* 66, no. 1 (1979): 63–64, https://doi.org/10.2307/1894674.

and allied forces must posture to hold Western Europe against Soviet expansionism and aggression.[186]

### 1. The Soviet Conventional Threat and BROILER, FLEETWOOD, and TROJAN

U.S. planners generated war plan BROILER in 1947 and included the "first operationally oriented target list" which targeted 24 Soviet cities with 34 atomic bombs.[187] J.C.S. planners then developed emergency war plan HALFMOON in 1948 in order to provide authoritative emergency war planning guidance to theater commanders and uniformed service leadership, since BROILER had never been forwarded out of the J.C.S. as guidance.[188] HALFMOON, quickly renamed FLEETWOOD, also tasked U.S. forces to immediately withdraw to the Rhine River after the initial Soviet attack and then withdraw to French and Italian ports in order to evacuate the continent and prepare to re-attack after a U.S. atomic blitz in the vein of the Second World War strategic bombing campaign mounted from the United Kingdom and other allied-held basing areas.[189] War plan TROJAN, approved in December 1948, replaced FLEETWOOD and subsequently slated 133 atomic bombs for use against 70 Soviet cities in order to "exploit the destructive and psychological power of atomic weapons against the vital elements of Soviet war-making capacity…".[190]

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[186] Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Volume II*, 62–63 for the response of U.S. military and civilian leadership to the Czechoslovakia coup in 1948; 72–73 for the initial implementation of NSC Action 84 and President Truman's direction of resources to the airlift effort; and 83–85 for a summary of the interaction, or general lack thereof, of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the Truman administration. See also Abenheim and Halladay, 116–117 on how U.S. policy towards European security reoriented from occupation to alliance-centered defense in the immediate aftermath of the aforementioned crises.

[187] David Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945–1960," *International Security* 7, no. 4 (1983): 12, 15–16, https://doi.org/10.2307/2626731.

[188] Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Volume II*, 156.

[189] Condit, 156–157.

[190] Condit, 158. See also Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Evaluation of Effect on Soviet War Effort Resulting From the Strategic Air Offensive*, J.C.S. 1953/1, (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, May 13, 1949), 58, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/dc.html?doc=6895250-National-Security-Archive-Doc-02-Report-by-the.

U.S. military leaders directed JCS planners to assess the likely outcome of the atomic war planning within TROJAN. The now-declassified report, designated J.C.S. 1953/1, made a number of seemingly contradictory conclusions that, in the end, encouraged the growth of the U.S. atomic stockpile.[191] J.C.S. 1953/1 also assessed that the Soviet Union could field a larger conventional force within Europe, overrun U.S. and allied combat formations in Europe, reach the Rhine River in 5–10 days after initiation of the offensive, and advance to the Atlantic Ocean within 50–60 days of the start of war.[192]

The report also concluded that the Soviets would still be able to quickly overrun U.S. and allied forces in Europe even if atomic weapons were deployed as planned in TROJAN and, moreover, that atomic warfare would generate "adverse psychological and retaliatory reactions" against the U.S. and allies and encourage the Soviets to use "maximum retaliatory measures".[193] Simply put, the study concluded that the use of American atomic weapons against Soviet targets could, in fact, strengthen the resolve of the Russian people. Paradoxically, J.C.S. 1953/1 concluded that, despite these initial conclusions, atomic weapons should serve as a "major element of Allied military strength" and the best way to quickly damage key parts of the Soviet war machine: "the advantages of its early use would be transcending."[194] J.C.S. 1953/1 made the following key recommendation that President Truman reviewed and accepted: "Every reasonable effort should be devoted to providing the means to be prepared for prompt and efficient delivery of the maximum numbers of atomic bombs to appropriate target systems."[195]

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191 Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 11–12 for notes on how President Truman authorized expanding the U.S. atomic inventory in wake of J.C.S. 1953/1, which is also known as the "Harmon Report."

192 Joint Chiefs of Staff, "J.C.S. 1953/1," 59.

193 Joint Chiefs of Staff, "J.C.S. 1953/1," 7.

194 Joint Chiefs of Staff, "J.C.S. 1953/1," 8.

195 Joint Chiefs of Staff, "J.C.S. 1953/1," 8.

### 2. The Economics of National Defense and Nuclear War Plans

U.S. planners also had to manage domestic economic considerations over the course of war plan development. The U.S. national budget and the defense budget that were in effect during the Truman administration decisively shaped the course of U.S. nuclear warfighting planning. Rosenberg argues that President Truman's decision to restrict the U.S. defense budget to $14.4 billion in order to combat inflation presented a dilemma to U.S. defense planners: how should the U.S. best align financial means and military force structure against defense requirements?[196] U.S. military planners, such as Strategic Air Command (SAC) commander General Curtis LeMay, endorsed and advocated for strategic atomic bombing and development of the U.S. nuclear weapons program as a cost-effective means by which to assure U.S. security.[197] As Rosenberg concludes: "The president's continuing refusal to budget adequate conventional alternatives thus made the United States virtually dependent on the atomic bomb."[198]

The J.C.S. replaced TROJAN with war plan OFFTACKLE in late 1949. OFFTACKLE also envisioned SAC conducting an atomic air offensive against the Soviet Union, and the target planning extended to a wider range of objectives and locations than what TROJAN listed.[199] OFFTACKLE also required U.S. forces in Europe to occupy a defensive front line no farther west than the Rhine river.[200] U.S. war planning, therefore, oriented U.S. planners towards developing a land force that could defend and fight, outnumbered, against the Soviets.

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196 Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," 69.

197 Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," 69–70.

198 Rosenberg, "American Atomic Strategy and the Hydrogen Bomb Decision," 69.

199 Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, Volume II, 160–161.

200 Condit, 162.

## C. 1945-1954: GERMAN GENERALS, THE "CLEAN WEHRMACHT," AND U.S. ARMY HISTORIANS

The German Second World War experience swiftly attracted the attention of U.S. military thinkers after the end of the Second World War. U.S. Army planners solicited and integrated the input of senior German *Wehrmacht* officers in order to adapt American doctrine, such as FM 100–5 (1944 and 1949) which emphasized fixed and positional warfare to the requirement to block and delay conventionally superior Soviet forces. "Mobile defense" emerged as the doctrinal change in FM 100–5 (1954). The U.S. Army subsequently adopted the "Pentomic Division" organizational plan in order to keep pace with the emphasis on atomic warfighting increasingly prevalent in U.S. military planning circles.

### 1. The U.S. Army Historical Division and the Halder Group

The U.S. Army established the Historical Branch in July 1943 with the assigned mission to record the history of Army action in the Second World War.[201] U.S. Army researchers initially travelled to Europe in 1945 in order to write the story of the Army as it unfolded in that theater of operations.[202] The Army renamed the Historical Branch as the Historical Division, and the Historical Division subsequently formed the Operational History (German) Section in order to organize the interviews of hundreds of *Wehrmacht* general officers who were prisoners of war.[203] The U.S. Army Historical Division appointed General Franz Halder, who served as the chief of the Oberkommando des Heeres (OKH) during 1939–1942, and was subsequently relieved by Hitler, arrested in 1944 in the wake of the 20 July assassination attempt, and then imprisoned in several concentration camps.[204] The "Halder Group" generated over 700 reports by early 1949, and the

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[201] Kevin Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide: The German Report Series and Its Effect on American Defense Doctrine, 1948–1954," *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 4 (1993): 658, https://doi.org/10.2307/2944098.

[202] Soutor, 659.

[203] Soutor, 659.

[204] Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 56.

supervisory Foreign Studies Branch within the Historical Division began to plan to release the German Report Series.[205]

Halder and the German senior officers who worked with the Historical Division did so for several reasons. German officers contested the Nuremberg proceedings, which occurred during 1946–194 as ill-deserved and in conjunction with West German political leadership worked to either reduce or acquit sentences awarded to war criminals such as Joachim Peiper, who led the SS troops responsible for executing over one hundred American prisoners of war at Malmedy in Belgium during the Ardennes Offensive in winter 1944.[206] Smelser and Davies state that Halder, throughout the course of his direct involvement with the Division and afterward, desired to support the continued fight against Bolshevism and "rescue the honor" of the German officer corps and rehabilitate the image of the German officer corps in the eyes of the United States.[207]

Large segments of the German populace, and allied leaders, associated the self-defeating militarism of the *Wehrmacht* with military officers, and German officers formed various veteran's organizations that sought to better the lot of demobilized soldiers and end the "defamation" of the former wartime combatants, many of whom were destitute, unemployed, and held responsible for the impact of the war in Germany.[208] The image of

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[205] Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide," 674.

[206] See Tom Bower, *Blind Eye to Murder: Britain, America and the Purging of Nazi Germany* (London: Granada Publishing, 1983), 118–119 for initial reporting on the Malmedy massacre as it occurred during the Ardennes offensive in December 1944 and 412 for notes on domestic German political opposition to the execution of Peiper and implications on the discussion revolving around West German rearmament; see also Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 55–56 for the transition of general U.S. domestic popular and professional military opinion towards either general indifference or support to the German officer corps in the wake of the Nuremberg trials and 168-169 for notes on the Malmedy massacre and the complicity and trial of Joachim Peiper.

[207] Smelser and Davies II, 65–66, 70–71.

[208] Jay Lockenour, *Soldiers as Citizens: Former Wehrmacht Officers in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945–1955* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2001) 31 and 34–37 for notes on the formation and goals of early veteran's organizations in postwar Germany, 25 and 27 for details on the anti-military sentiment present within postwar Germany, 50 for details on the goal to restore the honor of the German soldier that was resident in one such organization, the *Verband Deutscher Soldaten* (VDS), and 181 for a summary of the impact of the Allied occupation on the career, livelihood, and value system of Wehrmacht officers in postwar Germany.

the German soldier conveyed by Halder and his interviewees aligned with the image conveyed by many more demobilized *Wehrmacht* officers in Germany after Zero Hour: the German *Wehrmacht*, to be distinguished from the *Schutzstaffel* (SS) death camp guard/ *Waffen-SS* troopers, had kept their honor.[209] Such senior *Wehrmacht* officers such as Erich von Manstein and Heinz Guderian reinforced the emerging narrative that the *Wehrmacht* soldiers and leaders had labored under an incompetent and inflexible supreme leader, and succumbed to Allied numerical and material superiority only after establishing an unparalleled and peerless combat record in the realms of operations and tactics.[210]

### 2. The *German Report Series* and Historical "Lessons Learned"

U.S. Army doctrinal development occurred within an evolving strategic and political environment distinguished by the increasing imperative to defend European allies against the conventionally superior Soviet threat and rising profile of the air-delivered U.S. nuclear arsenal within the U.S. military. The German experience on the Eastern Front, therefore, seemed to provide historical lessons tailored to the very situation at hand, and lent Army planners some historical justification for advocating the importance of their service role within the requirement to defend Europe.[211] *German Report Series* pamphlets such as DA PAM 20-230, *Russian Combat Methods in World War II*, DA PAM 20-269,

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[209] See Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross: The Search for Tradition in the West German Armed Forces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) 70–71 for notes on the "political and human compromise" resident within the attempt of former Wehrmacht officers to distance themselves from the murderous record of the National Socialist regime within the context of early state-building in West Germany; see also 55 for details on how the Himmerod Memorandum, prepared in support of West German leadership desire to rearm amidst the heightened tensions of the Cold War, advocated for the cessation of the "defamation" of the German soldier and the need to "rehabilitate" the German soldier via a "declaration of honor" and provision of social welfare support. See also Lockenour, *Soldiers as Citizens,* 69–70 and 72 for the efforts by postwar Wehrmacht officers to disassociate themselves from SS and *Sturmbateilung (SA)* actions, and general responsibility for supporting Hitler's policies.

[210] See Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader,* 12 for a laudatory introduction penned by Basil Liddell Hart; 142 for Guderian's view that the 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union was "something which I held to be utterly impossible,"; 264–271 for Guderian's account of his recommendation to Hitler, at the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (OKW), to conduct a limited withdrawal in Russia and subsequent relief by Hitler; 424 for Guderian's critique of the "insane" orders issued by Hitler; 432 for Guderian's thoughts on how the Versailles settlement victimized Germany and set conditions for the rise of Hitler; and 430 for Guderian's account of the "leading personalities of the Third Reich," wherein he disassociates himself from any relationship to Himmler's SS activities and specifically the *Einsatzgruppen.*

[211] Soutor, "To Stem the Red Tide," 663 and 674.

*Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia*, and DA PAM 20-233, *German Defense Tactics against Russian Breakthroughs*, transmitted the German version of the Eastern Front to a receptive audience within the U.S. military, who subsequently discussed the content of these pamphlets within professional journals and the military educational establishment.[212]

These pamphlets captured the essence and innate contradictions of the German response to defeat on the Eastern Front. The paradox communicated in these manuals was thus: the *Wehrmacht* succumbed, eventually, in a premodern and almost primeval environment under the sheer mass of the Red Army, which somehow blended military cunning and improvisation with the subhuman qualities of its indoctrinated foot soldiers.[213] The Russian soldier struggled to cope with unexpected changes in his environment, and yet managed to execute unorthodox tank tactics and infiltrate German positions with relative ease.[214] The *Wehrmacht* did, however, employ mobile defense tactics and frequent counterattacks in the defense to delay and attrit the Red Army as the

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[212] See Souter, 675 for notes on U.S. Army professional discourse regarding the *German Report Series*, which was published from 1950 to 1954.

[213] Department of the Army, *Russian Combat Methods in World War II*. DA PAM 20-230 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, November 1950), https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll9/id/636, 7 for digression on how the Russian soldier is a "semi-Asiatic" incapable of independent thought and exhibits the "courage of the herd"; 11 for how Russian material resources and population advantage worked against the Germans, also see 11 for how Soviet commanders devalued human life; 14 for the role of the commissar in Russian operations; 24 for how Russian battle techniques indicated a general "disdain" for the value of human life; 30 for how Russia was best considered as an operational environment "about a century" behind that of Europe; 76–78 for how the Russian soldier was an inherently superior forest fighter; 103–104 for how the Russians utilized partisan operations behind the lines; and 114 for how "death zones" in vicinity of German-controlled railways were appropriate means to manage rear area security requirements.

[214] Department of the Army, *Small Unit Actions during the German Campaign in Russia, DA PAM 20-269* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, July 1953), https://history.army.mil/html/books/104/104-22-1/index.html, 6 for how the Russian soldier was a "master" of infiltration; 15 for how the Russian soldier struggled to manage unexpected situations; 31–36 for notes on how effective the Russian soldier was in the cold environment; 37 on the lack of lower-level initiative within Russian combat formations; 74 for how unorthodox Russian tank tactics confused the Germans on the Eastern Front; 76 for the critical role of Lend-Lease aid on Russian tank construction; 190 for the positive influence of German and Austrian defectors within Russian units; and 236 for more notes on the "innate" Russian characteristics which made them excellent forest fighters.

German line collapsed in the wake of the Stalingrad debacle and ensuing Red Army operational and strategic offensive in the years 1943-1945.[215]

### 3. The Year 1953: The German Generals Review U.S Army FM 100–5

It is this defensive experience at the tactical and operational level that most interested U.S. Army planners in the context of the imperative to defend Europe in 1949 from something other than an offshore air and maritime strategy with no continental commitment. Once NATO was founded, this imperative of forward defense grew steadily more urgent. The capstone U.S. Army field tactical manual, FM 100–5, mandated that U.S. Army units retain fortified defensive positions capable of mutually supporting each other "at all costs" and be prepared to focus artillery fire on a "main line of resistance".[216] Which at the time was rather close to the Atlantic Coast, and entailed abandoning much of Europe to the Red Army. The U.S. Army submitted the 1949 version of the capstone U.S. Army doctrinal operations publication, FM 100–5, to a select group of German military leaders.[217] This study group produced MS #P-133: "Analysis of U.S. Field Service

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[215] Department of the Army, *German Defense Tactics Against Russian Breakthroughs, DA PAM 20-233,* redesignated as CMH Pub 104–14-1 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, October 1951 as DA PAM 20-233, facsimile edition redesignated as CMH Pub released in 1984), https://history.army.mil/html/books/104/104-14-1/cmhPub_104-14-1.pdf, 3 for the value of the frontal counterattack as applied against a Soviet breakthrough or penetration; 9 for the value of attacking the flank of a penetrating assault force and the risks therein; 13 for the applicability of flank attacks towards large-scale defensive operations; 15 for the value of a "spoiling attack" aimed to swiftly assault and interfere with enemy offensive preparations; 20–21 for details on the employment of "defensive pincer" countermeasures consisting of dual attacks on both flanks of Soviet breakthroughs; 27 for the importance of maintaining mobile reserves capable of shifting between successive prepared defensive positions; 34–35 for the employment of strong point and fortress-type defensive positions as "emergency measures"; 57–58 for notes on the conduct of delaying and blocking actions with the support of reserves; 64 on the usefulness of delaying the enemy offense via successive positions; 71 on the combination of various defensive tactics during the Russian campaign, and 80 on the final note that "skillful defense tactics and supreme personal sacrifices were instrumental in producing local, temporary relief."

[216] Department of the Army, *Field Service Regulations*, FM 100–5 (Headquarters, Department of the Army: Washington, DC, August 1949), https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll9/id/979, 120 for the dictum that "defensive doctrine contemplates the selection and organization of a battle position which is to be held at all costs,"; 127–128 for the requirement that main battle positions consist of fortified "tactical localities" capable of mutual support; 128 for the identification of the "main line of resistance" as, essentially, a fire support control measure enabling direction of field artillery and other supporting arms.

[217] Souter, "To Stem the Red Tide," 677.

Regulations." MS #P-133, published in 1953, critiqued the formulaic approach that FM 100–5 (1949) took towards battle leadership, challenged the rigid nature of U.S. defensive doctrine that discounted defensive combat as a purely in-extremis mode of warfare and corresponding requirement for a "main line of resistance" to be held "at all costs," and also questioned the inattentiveness towards armor employment resident throughout the manual.[218]

This critique informed the approach the Army took towards FM 100–5. "Mobile defense" (a term borrowed from the Weimar Republic *Reichswehr* and used by the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front) entered the Army lexicon within the version of FM 100–5 released in 1954, and channeled some of the input of the German review group and the output of the Halder Group.[219] Per FM 100–5 (1954), mobile defense consisted of establishing lightly manned forward defensive positions tasked to provide early warning of any impending attack, canalize the opponent into undesirable terrain, and ideally block the enemy in order to allow a reserve "striking force" to maneuver on and destroy the attacking force.[220]

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[218] Franz Halder et al., *Analysis of U.S. Field Service Regulations,* MS #P-133 (Historical Division, Headquarters, United States Army Europe, 1953), https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll11/id/1255/, 7 for reflection on desirable officer character traits; 8 for the admonition that "inaction and neglect of opportunities" merits more "severe censure" than flawed judgment associated with action; 9 for the cautionary note that "cut and dried" planning stifles initiative in battle; 9 for the critique of FM 100–5 (1949) as excessively focused on the value of the offensive; 10 for the critique that FM 100–5 (1949) perceives defense as an inherently passive form of fighting, in contrast to the Clausewitzian maxim that defense is stronger; 12 for the critique that FM 100–5 (1949) exhibits a weakness for "pattern type planning" that is ill-suited for the battlefield; 12 for the critique that FM 100–5 (1949) retains the "outworn concept" of outpost-system defense that is "regulated in every detail" and has been rendered obsolete by motorized forces, radios, and aircraft; 13 for the criticism that FM 100–5 (1949) lends insufficient attention to the need to shift "main effort" focus as a "means for flexible conduct of operations"; 14 for the recommendation to include a separate chapter on "delaying action" as a defensive measure within subsequent versions of FM 100–5; 37 and 39 for the observation that FM 100–5 does not consider armor employment; 64 for the thesis that FM 100–5 (1949) improperly characterizes the defense as an "expedient to be resorted to in time of need"; 73–74 for recommended modifications to the "Main Battle Position" section in FM 100–5 (1949).

[219] Souter, "To Stem the Red Tide," 679.

[220] Department of the Army, *Field Service Regulations* (1954), 120.

### 4. The Year 1956: The Pentomic Era Begins and the End of Mobile Defense

Smelser and Davies observe that the high financial cost of the armored force needed to support the new mobile defense doctrine and the new requirements of atomic warfighting planning precluded the application of mobile defense doctrine to actual Army force structure changes.[221] Senior U.S. Army leaders in the early 1950s increasingly believed that tactical atomic weaponry, i.e., heavy artillery and battlefield missiles, rendered the standard Army infantry division tactical triangular organization obsolete, and that armored units as organized were the only U.S. Army units capable of surviving on any future European battlefield.[222] This change occurred within the broader context of President Eisenhower's "New Look" strategy, which prioritized the expansion of the U.S. fission and fusion bomb arsenal as a cost-effective measure of assuring national defense that directed funding towards the U.S. Air Force Strategic Air Command in particular, and away from the U.S. Army amid much civil-military friction and problems of alliance cohesion.[223]

General Matthew Ridgway, Army Chief of Staff from 1953–1955, assailed the "New Look" approach as fundamentally flawed and called on the U.S. National Security Council to "reject emphatically any policy of preventive war" as "devoid of moral principle."[224] Nevertheless, the Eisenhower administration carried out the "New Look" policy, and the Army reluctantly adapted and became politicized. Army planners believed that combat formations needed to be able to be highly mobile in order to quickly disperse

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221 Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 70–71.

222 Robert A. Doughty, "The Evolution of U.S. Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946–76," *Leavenworth Papers*, no 1 (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, August 1979), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/combat-studies-institute/csi-books/doughty.pdf, 16.

223 Andrew Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era: The U.S. Army Between Korea and Vietnam* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1986), https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA956178, 11–12 for the impact of NSC 162/2 on U.S. defense budget planning; 14–16 for the basic precepts of the New Look program emphasizing the utility of nuclear weapons, preparation to combat Soviet subversion activities worldwide, and covert action. See also Richard M. Leighton, "Strategy, Money, and the New Look 1953–1956," *History of the Office of the Secretary of Defense* Volume III, (Washington, D.C.: Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2001), https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a398998.pdf, 674.

224 Bacevich, *The Pentomic Era: The U.S. Army Between Korea and Vietnam*, 37.

on the atomic battlefield.[225] General Maxwell Taylor, the next Chief of Staff of the Army, introduced the highly air mobile and smaller brigade-structured "Pentomic Division" concept to the public in 1956 after a series of Army practice maneuvers in Europe and the United States that sought to confront the tactical and operational use of nuclear weapons then coming into widespread use on both sides.[226] The Pentomic Division organizational structure, so named due to the subdivision of all "battle group" echelons into successive groupings of five units, endured until President Kennedy introduced his "Flexible Response" strategy that mandated the Army prepare to fight guerillas in revolutionary wars outside of Europe and also led to the so-called Reorganization Objectives Army Division (ROAD) structure in the early 1960s.[227]

## D. 1973-1982: THE ERA OF ACTIVE DEFENSE AND AIRLAND BATTLE

In the wake of the October 1973 war and the end of the Indochina war in 1975, the Army reoriented on the European defense mission, and specifically examined how to best employ mechanized units to support that mission.[228] The defense of Germany, and strategic-political requirement to cede as little West German terrain as possible to the Warsaw Pact, lent momentum to the "active defense" doctrinal concept as enshrined in FM 100–5 (1976).[229] The commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrinal Command

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[225] Bacevich, 68–69.

[226] Doughty, "The Evolution of U.S. Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946–76," 16.

[227] Bacevich, 105–107 for the Pentomic task organization, which encompassed the three division types (armored, infantry, and airborne) and included five "battle groups," each consisting of five companies with five platoons detailed to each company, in addition to dedicated transport and service support aimed at increasing battlefield mobility and self-sufficiency on the anticipated atomic battlefield; 142–143 for the beginning of the transition to counterinsurgency within the context of the "Flexible Response" strategy. See also Doughty, "The Evolution of U.S. Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946–76," 19–20 for the transition of U.S. Army organizational planning away from the Pentomic construct to the "Modern Mobile Army" organizational idea in 1960; see 21–22 for the transition to the Reorganization Objectives Army Division (ROAD) structure, initially advanced by Major General Harold Johnson in 1961. The proposed ROAD division included a "common division base" and three brigade headquarter elements in addition to artillery units which could be augmented with nuclear artillery shells, additional aviation units, and the advertised capability to "tailor" the division force to nuclear and non-nuclear combat.

[228] Doughty, 40.

[229] Herbert, "Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100–5, Operations," 64–65.

(TRADOC), General William DePuy, especially looked to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war as a source for "lessons learned" applicable to the European front.[230] DePuy was a Second World War combat veteran who appreciated the tactical acumen of his German wartime opponents and believed that U.S. air and artillery fires lent the Army the "margin of superiority in overall combat power" in that conflict.[231] He elected, in 1974, to employ TRADOC to re-write all Army field manuals in order to transmit the lessons of the 1973 war and the methods best suited to meet European land defense requirements.[232]

### 1. General DePuy, TRADOC, the *Bundeswehr*, and FM 100–5

General DePuy maintained a professional interest in the German approach to fighting, and the organization of *Bundeswehr* units and their approach to fighting and defensive operations shaped his approach towards FM 100–5. DePuy visited Germany in 1974 and learned about how the West Germans employed *Panzergrenadier* units, for instance.[233] DePuy admired these formations, which were the successors of the mechanized infantry that accompanied wartime *Wehrmacht* panzers into combat. The modern *Panzergrenadier* units employed infantry fighting vehicles in order to better protect and move mounted infantry soldiers around the modern battlefield.[234] DePuy intended to realign U.S. Army doctrine to capture what he perceived to be the German emphasis on armored mobility and "forward defense" as close to the contested East-West border as possible. DePuy established and maintained personal relationships with senior members of the West German *Bundeswehr*, supported a series of annual U.S-German meetings that revolved around military doctrine, training, and equipment.[235] General DePuy informed the Army Chief of Staff, General Weyand, as such in 1975: "TRADOC,

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230 Herbert, 37.

231 Herbert, 15 for DePuy's admiration of German tactics during his Second World War combat experience; 16 for his thoughts on the importance of air and artillery-delivered firepower.

232 Herbert, 37.

233 Herbert, 63.

234 Herbert, 64.

235 Herbert, 62,

in conjunction with FORSCOM, is now changing our doctrine (tactics and techniques) to conform with the German. Basically, we are involved in moving from a 'Dismounted Infantry' oriented doctrine to an 'Armored' doctrine with the Infantry, Artillery, and Air Defense in support…".[236]

Army officers tasked to update FM 100–5 took the cue and reviewed translated copies of the German doctrinal publication HDv 100/100, which was published in September 1973.[237] HDv 100/100 emphasized repelling any enemy offensive as far forward as possible and directed commanders to be prepared to rapidly shift their focus of effort, assume risk in some defensive sectors in order to mass in others, and deploy mobile counterattacks as needed.[238] General DePuy travelled to Germany in 1975, briefed senior German officers on the new draft of FM 100–5, and returned satisfied that the two publications—the draft version of FM 100–5 and the published HDv 100/100—detailed the same defensive principles. TRADOC had been communicating directly with German army leadership, and Herbert contends that General DePuy leveraged these professional relationships and the impression that U.S. Army doctrine was evolving to mirror German operational requirements in order to legitimize the draft version of FM 100–5.[239]

The Army published the revised version of FM 100–5 in 1976. FM 100–5 (1976) identified war in Europe as the "most demanding mission" for the Army and aligned the content of the manual primarily towards how Army forces should fight in that scenario with the admonition that, if so tasked, Army units should be prepared to operate elsewhere.[240] FM 100–5 explicitly outlined "how to fight" over the course of the said named third chapter, and identified four key "prerequisites" to be satisfied in order to win in combat: 1) sufficient levels of forces and weapons should be concentrated at the correct

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[236] Herbert, 64.

[237] Herbert, 65–66.

[238] Herbert, 65.

[239] Herbert, 67–68.

[240] Department of the Army, *Field Service Regulations*, FM 100–5 (Headquarters, Department of the Army: Washington, DC, August 1976), https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll9/id/972/, 1–2.

places; 2) fighting must be "controlled and directed" in order to focus the effect of fires and maneuver; 3) Army units should employ "cover, concealment, suppression, and combined arms teamwork" in order to "maximize the effectiveness of our weapons," and 4) weapon and vehicle teams and crews "must be trained to use the maximum capabilities of their weapons."[241] Chapter 5, "Defense" identified five "fundamentals of the defense," and directed units in the defense to mass forces and fires at Soviet breakthrough points along the "Forward Edge of the Battle Area" (FEBA).[242] Chapter 5 proscribed defensive tactics down to the level of anti-tank guided missile crew emplacement guidance and company-level engagement criteria, and also tasked tank commanders to position "hull down" whenever possible.[243]

General DePuy argued that military doctrine "very clearly is based around weapon systems…it says that you study the weapons, yours and the enemy's (sic), and then you look for ways of optimizing the employment of your new weapons and minimizing your vulnerability" during a post-career interview with the U.S. Military History institute in

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[241] FM 100–5 (1976), 3–3 for the admonition that "failure to make full protective use of terrain can prove fatal" and the listing of 4 "battlefield dynamics"; see also 3–4 for the delineation of duties and responsibilities between general officers, field grade officers, and company grade officers and for the requirement that the "skillful commander substitutes firepower for manpower whenever he can do so"; see 3–5 for the observation that "massive and violent firepower is a chief ingredient of combat power"; and 3–10 for the outline of the various members of the "combined arms" team; see 3–11 for a hit-percentage analysis on the likelihood of a Soviet T-62 successfully hitting a M60 U.S. tank in various stages of movement; see 3–12 for additional weaponeering considerations scaled down to the 7.62mm caliber level and also casualty percentage calculations for casualties incurred within various levels of entrenchment from variable time (VT) fused artillery shells; see 3–13 for a "probability of first round kill" graph analysis of Soviet "Sagger" ATGM lethality; see 3–14 for the advice that "the captain must train his gunners to fire first and to fire accurately;" and see 3–16 for several matrices assigning responsibilities and roles for types of communication between and within U.S. Army units.

[242] FM 100–5 (1976), 5–3 for the requirement for defensive commanders to be "willing to take risks on the flanks" and "concentrate at the critical times and places"; 5–7 to 5–8 for the goal to keep combat as far forward along the FEBA as possible; 5–10 for the role of the "covering force" forward of the main battle area; and 5–13 for the requirement to "maintain coherence along the FEBA" and for defenders to "destroy many targets in a short period of time." Also, see 5–14 for guidance on the tactical employment of tanks and ATGM teams in the counterattack.

[243] FM 100–5 (1976), 5–5 to 5–6 for guidance on the helicopter-borne insertion of anti-tank guided missile teams and their subsequent emplacement in advantageous terrain; 5–7 for the requirement for company grade officers to ensure all weapons are properly sited and that fighting vehicles are "covered and concealed, or at least be hull down" and that "*they must fire first.*"

Carlisle, Pennsylvania.[244] Critics, however, argued that FM 100–5 (1976) valued the technical and excessively rigid application of firepower over initiative and maneuver, relied on weapon systems that were not fully fielded, and did not address how to counter follow-on Soviet counterattacks.[245] General Edward Meyer served as the Army Chief of Staff during 1979–1983, and believed that FM 100–5 (1976) oriented excessively on European war, believed that Army doctrine should address a broader spectrum of possible missions, and observed that the ability of Army officers to exercise military judgment was eroding under the requirement to adhere to more scripted doctrinal principles like that in FM 100–5 (1976).[246] General Donn Starry, who commanded V Corps in West Germany in 1976, observed that units attempting to employ the active defense doctrine in field exercises were frequently "destroyed" by successive follow-on echelons of simulated enemy forces – V Corps, it seemed, could fight for six days at most and would sustain fifty percent casualties.[247]

### 2. 1977-1982: The Revision of FM 100–5, the Return of Maneuver, and the Introduction of AirLand Battle

General Starry returned to the United States in 1977 after commanding V Corps in West Germany, assumed command of TRADOC, and directed TRADOC and members of the Command and General Staff College to revise FM 100–5 (1976).[248] FM 100–5 (1982) detailed "AirLand Battle" doctrine and differed substantially, in tone and content, from FM 100–5 (1976).[249] Taking more than a page from the German record, AirLand Battle emphasized "indirect approaches," the initiative of lower-echelon commanders, planning

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[244] William E. Depuy, (William Eugene), Romie L. Brownlee, and William J. Mullen. *Changing an Army: an Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA Retired*. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Military History Institute, 1988, https://history.army.mil/html/books/070/70-23/CMH_Pub_70-23.pdf, 189.

[245] Linn, *The Echo of Battle,* 205–206, 208–209.

[246] Linn, 207–208.

[247] Linn, 208–209.

[248] Linn, 209.

[249] Linn, 209.

within the operational level of war, and "deep attack" to support defensive operations.[250] The manual described successful defensive operations as consisting of a "shield of blows," and stated that "Offensive combat is as much a part of defensive operations as strongpoint defenses or delaying defenses."[251] This marked a clear departure from the previous field manual, and aimed to enable U.S. forces to counter follow-on Soviet echelons via maneuvering to positions of advantage and not merely lying in wait, per the "active defense" model.[252]

The manual also explicitly cites the fact that "US, German, and Israeli campaign plans have historically made use of long-range interdiction to gain local battlefield advantages."[253] FM 100–5 (1982) defined the "dynamics of battle" prior to addressing offensive and defensive operations in order to establish that "intangible factors" such as "leader skill, firmness of purpose, and boldness" often supersede more tangible aspects of fighting – force ratios and firepower effect, for example – to decide the outcome of combat.[254] FM 100–5 also directed commanders to issue "mission orders" that avoided overly proscribing subordinate courses of action in order to allow room for subordinate initiative in combat.[255]

## E. WEHRMACHT SCHOLARSHIP AND THE MYTH AND REALITY OF GERMAN WARFARE

### 1. AirLand Battle and the German Generals in Northern Virginia

U.S. Army officers continued to solicit *Wehrmacht* officers for advice regarding Cold War military challenges into the 1980s, when Army doctrinal developers introduced

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250 FM 100–5 (1982), 7–2.

251 FM 100–5 (1982), 10–1, 11–1/

252 Linn, *The Echo of Battle,* 210.

253 FM 100–5 (1982), 7–13.

254 Department of the Army, *Field Service Regulations*, FM 100–5 (Headquarters, Department of the Army: Washington, DC, August 1982), https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll9/id/976/, 2–4 for "dynamics of battle."

255 FM 100–5 (1982), 2–7.

"AirLand Battle" as a warfighting concept. Academic scholarship and U.S. military professional discourse also oriented on German wartime history in the 1970s and 1980s. Academics profiled the historical German General Staff as possessing a "genius for war," and cited the developmental history of the First World War German *stosstrupp* as the record of an ideal type of organization which decentralized leadership and capability to the lowest tactical level in order to overcome the severe operational restrictions on maneuver which existed on the Western Front. Other scholars looked to the Second World War German raids in 1940 Eban Emael and in support of the Mussolini rescue in 1943 and concluded that the Germans had, indeed, mastered military tactics. This approach, collectively, orients almost exclusively on the military record of German arms as manifested in battles won and narrowly lost, idealized staff planning structures, and "lessons learned" as applicable towards U.S. military effectiveness in battle at the tactical and operational level.

General DePuy, after his retirement, invited two former *Wehrmacht* commanders to participate in a wargame held in northern Virginia in 1980 in order to "develop relevant, transferable insights, appropriate for application in contemporary and future tactical situations, based on the extensive experience of two veteran German general officers who came to know the Russians as few living persons have."[256] The BDM Corporation, based out of northern Virginia, convened the war game in May 1980, and hosted two *Wehrmacht* officers: Generals Balck and Mellenthin. General Hermann Balck was the commander of the Sixth German Army at the end of the Second World War, and General Mellenthin was serving as the Chief of Staff within the Fifth Panzer Army at that time. Both men had served together in Russia, and General Mellenthin had operated as General Balck's Chief of Staff during the Russian campaign.[257]

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[256] William DePuy, *Generals Balck and Mellenthin on Tactics: Implications for NATO Military Doctrine*, BDM/W-81-077-TR (Maclean, VA: The BDM Corporation, 1980), https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a097704.pdf., 1.

[257] DePuy, 8 for General Hermann Balck's biography, 9 for the biography of General Major A. D. F. W. Von Mellenthin.

The German generals participated in a war game exercise along with several other senior U.S. Army commanders, and the scenario involved the U.S. Army V Corps Third Armored Division and the defense of West Germany.[258] American representatives explained that the Third Division mission was to defend as far forward as possible in the Hunfeld-Lauterbach-Bad Hersfeld area, in keeping with U.S. "active defense" doctrine.[259] General Balck conferred with his former chief of staff, and they quickly briefed their plan. The Germans intended to allow Soviet forces to advance past the forward defensive lines and then attack, which was in keeping with how they had traded space for time on the Eastern Front.[260] The dictum "Schlagen aus der Nachhand", or "strike from the backhand", best captures how experienced German commanders such as Manstein conceptualized the art and practice of counterattacking under pressure.[261] The Germans advised that, based off their prior wartime experiences, Russian forces were best disoriented by attack from the flank, and that "the Russians were peculiarly susceptible to disorganization when confronted with new and unexpected situations."[262] The Germans also expounded on their thoughts on the proper positioning and actions of commanders, *Auftragstaktik,* the *Schwerpunckt*, and how the "moral power of the commander" was best leveraged at critical points in combat.[263] No voice, it seems, challenged Mellenthin's assertion as typical of a man of his time even in the 1980s that Russians "are masses and we are individuals…the difference between the Russian soldier and the European soldier."[264]

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[258] DePuy, 24.

[259] DePuy, 25.

[260] DePuy, 39.

[261] Bruno Kasdorf, "The Battle of Kursk: An Analysis of Strategic and Operational Principles," (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College), 8, https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/citations/ADA377406.

[262] DePuy, 54.

[263] DePuy, 4–5 for the thoughts of the German generals on the character and style of the Russian and German armies, including a discussion on the concept of *auftragstaktik*, and military tactics and techniques in general; 17–18 for an additional discussion of *auftragstakik;* 50 for the importance of locating the "moral power" of the commander at the *schwerpunckt,* or focus of effort.

[264] DePuy, 12.

### 2. Maneuver Warfare, Fighting Power, and Special Operations

*Schwerpunckt* appeared again in William Lind's *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, defined as the "focus of effort" and "where the commander can believe he can achieve a decision."[265] Lind informed the U.S. Marine Corps "maneuver warfare" intellectual movement by extracting and transmitting vignettes and excerpts drawn from English-language study of *Wehrmacht* fighting prowess, to include Martin van Creveld's *Fighting Power* (1982). The *Maneuver Warfare Handbook* extolls the virtues of decentralized leadership and command and control via "mission type orders," "trust tactics," the value of thinking "two levels up," and understanding how to assess enemy strengths and "gaps" in order to plan successfully.[266]

Lind also cites Martin van Creveld's *Fighting Power* as "must reading" if the reader "is to understand how everything a military service is and does must follow from maneuver doctrine if it is to be capable of maneuver warfare in combat."[267] Van Creveld assessed battle and casualty statistics from various Second World War engagements between the German armed forces and Allied units, observed that German units continually inflicted more casualties than they sustained despite nearly continuous reversals later in the war, and argued that the internal organization and structure of the Second World War German *Wehrmacht* enabled that organization to outfight all enemies in that conflict.[268] As Van

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[265] Lind, *Maneuver Warfare Handbook*, 17.

[266] Lind, 13–14 for the importance of "mission type orders" that leave the determination of the precise conduct of the mission to the subordinate; 17–18 for notes on the importance of identifying and understanding the *schwerpunckt*; 22–23 for how maneuver warfare tactics are really "trust tactics" grounded in the trust between commander and subordinate; and 42 for the importance of "thinking two levels up" and understanding the broader mission of higher command.

[267] Lind, 60.

[268] Martin Van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939–1945*, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1982,) 163 for commentary on the role of German military organization and the generation of combat power. Van Creveld contextualizes his conclusion on p. 166 that the German Wehrmacht, based off of statistical analysis of fighting efficiency, was the superior force with the conclusion that "so strong was the grip in which the organization held its personnel that the latter simply did not care where they fought, against whom, and why." See 168 for an assessment of the U.S. military officer corps performance during the Second World War; 38 for the divergence between German and American command principles; 53 on German delegation of authority within staffs; 68 on German "whole person analysis" as integrated into selection processes for military service; and 134–137 for notes on German military selection, education, and training processes.

Creveld states: "The German Army was a superb fighting organization. In point of morale, elan, unit cohesion, and resilience, it probably had no equal among twentieth century armies."[269] Van Creveld discounts national character and ideology as a causal variable with regard to the disparity in U.S. and German wartime performance statistics and concludes that German organizational principles that reduced administrative burden, command principles that encouraged individual initiative, personnel management practices, and officer education practices that prioritized individual character over tested intelligence established the conditions that supported German battlefield success.[270]

Several German small-unit level raids have also attracted academic attention. Gudmundsson prefaces *Stormtroop Tactics* with a brief vignette of the successful German glider raid against the Belgian Eban Emael fortress in 1940 prior to the main assault of the 1940 campaign against Belgium and France.[271] McRaven integrates the Eban Emael raid into his survey of various small-unit missions in *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare*, and also outlines the planning and execution of the German *Fallschirmjaeger* mission that retrieved Benito Mussolini from captivity in 1943.[272] McRaven provides strategic and political context for the mission: the Allied landings in southern Italy in early 1943 and subsequent northern advances prompted the downfall of Mussolini and his imprisonment by the Italian Carabinieri. Therefore, Hitler himself tasked one of the "best commando leaders" in Germany to rescue the imprisoned leader.[273]

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[269] Van Creveld, 163.

[270] Van Creveld, 166 that the German Wehrmacht, based off of statistical analysis of fighting efficiency, was the superior force with the conclusion that "so strong was the grip in which the organization held its personnel that the latter simply did not care where they fought, against whom, and why." See 168 for an assessment of the U.S. military officer corps performance during the Second World War; 38 for the divergence between German and American command principles; 53 on German delegation of authority within staffs; 64 on the German priority to reduce administrative burdens within staffs; 68 on German "whole person analysis" as integrated into selection processes for military service; 131–132 on differences in opinion amongst German and American frontline troops about their officers, and 134–137 for notes on German military selection, education, and training processes.

[271] Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics*, xi-xii.

[272] McRaven, *Spec Ops*, 60–69 for analysis on the Eban Emael raid; 188–197 for analysis of the Mussolini rescue mission as nested within McRaven's "relative superiority" theory of special operations.

[273] McRaven, 163.

McRaven focuses on the role of the Austrian *SS* officer, Otto Skorzeny, and his special unit that was "the best-trained, best-equipped, and best-led commando outfit in the German armed forces."[274] The *Spec Ops* account of the mission assigns Skorzeny a leading role in the mission during both mission planning and execution, and deems the mission itself as a success because it demonstrated the capabilities and tactical acumen of the German armed forces, asserted the willingness of Nazi Germany to support allies under pressure, and also supported German propaganda needs.[275]

Recent critical scholarship casts doubt on the scope of control and importance that Skorzeny occupied within the Mussolini rescue mission. The German paratrooper and Naval Postgraduate School graduate Andreas Handschuh, for instance, analyzes the historical record of the raid, Allied postwar observation of Skorzeny, and the political-strategic situation of Germany in mid-1943 and concludes that Skorzeny substantially exaggerated his own role in the mission.[276] Handschuh concludes that Skorzeny served in a support role prior to and during the mission and lacked the leadership traits and training required to assume a leading role.[277] Therefore, Handschuh asserts, it is unlikely that Skorzeny, as a SS combat support officer, would have operated independently from or been in charge of the German *Fallschirmjaeger*/airborne troops that participated in the mission.[278] The Skorzeny myth did support German propaganda objectives aimed at

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[274] McRaven, 169.

[275] McRaven, 181–182 for notes on the mission planning and final brief that Skorzeny provided to the raid force; 188 for McRaven's conclusion and assessment of the mission.

[276] Handschuh, "Otto Skorzeny and the Real Conduct of Unternehmen Eich and Unternehmen Panzerfaust," 27; 28 for analysis conduct by the author on mission photographs that reveal divergence from the Skorzeny narrative and the historical record; 29 for the exaggerated role of Skorzeny and the influence of Nazi propaganda on the mission narrative; 30–33 for notes on the support role of Skorzeny.

[277] Handschuh 17–18 for Central Intelligence Agency reporting on Skorzeny that indicated he was a sub-par leader; 18 for the author's assessment that Skorzeny was not trained as an operational or tactical troop leader.

[278] Handschuh, 27.

inspiring the German population when the German war effort was under considerable pressure on the Eastern Front, and also to the south in Italy.[279]

### 3. Critical Scholarship and the Myth and Reality of German Warfare

The record of the *Wehrmacht* has also attracted scholarly attention within academia. Some observers cast the record of modern German arms as evidence to support the thesis that the *Wehrmacht* was an ideal type of military organization, and suggest that the German General Staff exhibited a "genius for war" as manifested in "combat superiority" and favorable casualty ratios, initiative at all levels of command, and the institutionalization of "military excellence.".[280] Gerhard Gross traces the historical continuity between different eras of German operational planning and concludes that the reality of the self-defeating record of German arms in Europe serves to counter the myth that German arms represents an ideal type of warfare. Timothy Glantz and Richard Overy illuminate how the Soviet war effort adapted to and eventually triumphed on the Eastern Front and how the history of the Red Army confounds the dismissive approach resident within myths of the Eastern Front. Mark Mazower also examines the inner workings of the National Socialist occupation in Central Europe, and illuminates the savage and ultimately self-defeating nature of racialized National Socialist wartime policies and how the racialized neo-colonial imaginings of Nazis such as Himmler metastasized and came into being under wartime pressure.

Gerhard Gross's *The Myth and Reality of German Warfare* considers the record of German arms in the Second World War and concludes that German operational thought as represented by the actions and plans of the OKH and Oberkommando der *Wehrmacht* (OKW) was unsustainable, ill-considered, and self-defeating.[281] German operational

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[279] Handschuh, 2 for the intersection of the Skorzeny "biographical legend" and Nazi propaganda; 12 for the strategic context of the Mussolini rescue; 22 for the focus of wartime German propaganda and the Skorzeny myth; 35 for the usefulness of the Mussolini raid within the context of Nazi recruiting goals and domestic German morale; 36 for how the propaganda value of the raid met German propaganda goals' 47–48 for a final note of caution on how to engage with Skorzeny's account of his wartime experiences.

[280] Dupuy, *A Genius for War*, 300–302.

[281] Gross, The Myth and Reality of German Warfare, 303–306.

thought and war planning oriented on waging short campaigns via the decisive battles of annihilation in order to compensate for Germany's exposed geographic position and historical shortfalls in resources and manpower.[282] Gross concludes that the German victories in Poland and France in 1939 and 1940 were not so much the result of long-term strategy as they were grounded in immediate operational planning, the exploitation of adversary mistakes, and the local initiative within the mobile panzer formations that continued to press the attack.[283]

Gross also highlights the fact that Hitler and the German military command were frequently at odds over the end goal of Eastern Front operations – namely, that Hitler desired to secure raw materials and the industrial base needed to sustain the war effort, and that the German high command typically oriented on attacking and destroying Russian forces in the field in the classical model.[284] Moreover, Gross emphasizes the fact that the Germans continually underrated the logistical and operational challenges of war in Russia, and indeed maintained a force that, for all the emphasis on panzer formations, remained largely either foot-mobile or partially motorized and relied on a thin "crust" of fully motorized armored formations.[285] Gross concludes that the German approach to war planning and war fighting that considered "warfare in a vacuum"[286] and emphasized rapid

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[282] Gross, 305–306.

[283] Gross, 192 for the linkages of the 1939 and 1940 Polish and French campaigns with past German operational thought; 196 for the absence of a broad German strategic war plan in 1939; and 203 for the conflict within the German high command over armor employment during the French campaign in 1940; see also 253 for the observation that the panzer forces that gained attention in France in 1940 represented a minority of the overall German army force structure.

[284] Gross, 205–206 and 246 for Hitler's strategic objectives; 211 for the perpetual lack of agreement between Hitler and the OKH regarding operational objectives on the Eastern Front during the BARBAROSSA planning process.

[285] Gross, 212 for the shortcomings in German operational planning prior to BARBAROSSA that discounted the challenges of operating in the vast Russian space against the Red Army; 223 for additional notes on the underestimation of Russian materiel and manpower strengths and Russian terrain and weather conditions; 215–216 and 303 for the perpetual disregard for logistics resident in German operational planning during the Second World War; 224 for the operational limitations of encircled panzer formations; and 299 for the observation that the armored "spearhead units" of the German army in the Second World War amounted to a small proportion of the overall force.

[286] Gross, 304.

movement, decisive battle against enemy formations, and deemphasized logistics was really "a military attempt to solve the strategic dilemma" that, historically, Germany had operated in since the time of Moltke.[287]

Smelser and Davies observe that one aspect of the "Myth of the Eastern Front" as transmitted by German officers after the Second World War adopts the Nazi racialized image of the Soviet solder that generally denigrates the Russian victory as won through mass and brute endurance.[288] The noted scholars of the Soviet and German armies Timothy Glantz and Richard Overy discredit this approach via their accounts of the story of Russian arms on the Eastern Front. Glantz and House observe that the historical record of Soviet wartime innovation effectively counters the "myth" that Hitler's interference, Russian terrain and winter conditions, and Soviet materiel superiority and U.S. Lend-Lease aid sealed the fate of the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front.[289]

Glantz and House observe that the Red Army dramatically reinvented itself in 1942–1943 and developed fighting tactics and operational practices that lent it a decisive advantage over German forces.[290] The Soviets employed mobile maneuver groups in order to conduct reconnaissance, employ fires, bypass German defenders, seize critical terrain, and encircle and reduce isolated German forces during their great transition to offensive operations in 1943.[291] Additionally, Overy observes that Soviet leadership directed the wholesale displacement and transport of much of the Russian heavy industrial base away from the German offensive in 1942 into areas east of the Ural mountains.[292] Overy also

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[287] Gross, 305–306.

[288] Smelser and Davies II, *The Myth of the Eastern Front*, 68–69 for the transmission of the racialized vision of the Russian soldier via Halder Group action; 248–249 for Halder Group actions in the context of the interest to counter Soviet activity in Europe.

[289] Glantz and House, *When Titans Clashed*, 354–355 for the myth that Hitler's interference and the scale of the Russian terrain, plus weather, inflicted defeat on German forces; see also 357–358 for the myth that U.S. lend-lease aid and the Soviet superiority in numbers and materiel alone generated the Russian victory in the east.

[290] Glantz and House, 362–363.

[291] Glantz and House, 362–363.

[292] Overy, *Russia's War,* 170–171.

observes that Russian engineers and soldiers developed capable tanks, aircraft, and heavy artillery on their own.[293] The principle contribution of Lend Lease, Overy observes, was to augment Russian logistical capabilities with trucks and enhance Russian communications capabilities with U.S. field radios.[294]

The body of military thought and historical scholarship that lauds and transmits the story of German arms and *Wehrmacht* tactical-operational success weights popular and military discourse to consider, specifically, the *Wehrmacht* as an ideal type of military organization unique in time and space and disconnected from the Nazi party state. Mazower's *Hitler's Empire* lends moral context to any effort made towards understanding the impact of German arms in Europe during the Second World War. Mazower observes that Hitler's racial philosophy established, animated, and guided the German strategy that reduced both occupied states and allies as de facto vassals who served to satisfy German economic need and desire for *lebensraum*.[295]

Mazower explains that the emergence of the Nazi *Gauleiter*, the progressive erosion of the rule of any sort of law within both Germany and the physical annihilation and legalistic exclusion of the occupied peoples of Central Europe, were all part of the centralization of rule of captured territories and extension of National Socialist Party-affiliated rulers throughout the occupied territories.[296] Nazi occupation unfolded in a

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[293] Overy, 190 for organizational changes within the Red Army that consolidated armor formations; 193 for notes on the development of the T-34 tank.

[294] Overy, 193–194 for notes on Lend Lease support and how it especially supported Russian transportation and radio command and control requirements.

[295] Mazower, *Hitler's Empire,* 5–6 for how Hitler diverged from previous models of European nationalist and for Hitler's vision of the rest of Europe as an area of production meant to service German requirements and nothing else; 29 on the divergence between the imperial rule of the Kaisers and Hitler's racial-nationalist perspective on warfare and the rule of the occupied territories; 182–184 and 207–209 for the foundations of the National Socialist New Order in racial pseudoscience; 204–207 for the overview of "General Plan East" and German neocolonial and premodern concepts of how the East might be settled. See also 322–326 for the general failure of Germany and the Axis allies to cooperate in any meaningful fashion regarding end diplomatic-political aims and grand strategy.

[296] Mazower, 227 on the organizational and practical differences between the Nazi civil service and the Party *gauleiters* and the extension of Hitler's decrees within the wartime administrative system; 251 on the Nazi avoidance of formally annexing Poland to the Third Reich upon conquest; and 253–255 for the erosion of prewar legal norms and their displacement by Nazi decree.

disordered fashion, and the SS, Army, and National Socialist party initially had overlapping spheres of influence that gradually saw the SS exert increasing influence within the police and security apparatus.[297] The intense combat on the Eastern Front catalyzed the move towards the "Final Solution," which the *Wehrmacht* directly and indirectly supported.[298] The inescapable conclusion is that the *Wehrmacht* served a racist imperialist nation-state that pursued generalized plunder, murder, and imperial dominion on an unparalleled scale and cannot be absolved in any way from the extent of National Socialist crimes.

[297] Mazower, 233–235 for notes on the SS assumption of police roles in various occupied territories as well as the absorption and co-option of parts of the German intelligentsia into the SS; 455–456 for the formation of the Waffen-SS.

[298] Mazower, 369–376 for the progression within Nazi planning towards the Final Solution; 379 for notes on the establishment of the first dedicated extermination camps within Poland; 377 for Mazower's account of the Wannsee Conference; 384 for how the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich and the subsequent "Operation Reinhard" accelerated the genocide; and 390 for data on the decline of the Central European Jewish population in the wake of the initiation of the Final Solution. See also

# IV. CONCLUSION

Despite the cult of "American exceptionalism" and the record of the U.S. as the world's military hegemon since 2003, this thesis has examined the idea: "How has European military history, military thought, and military myth shaped U.S. military thought?" The answer has surveyed the course of U.S. defense strategy as it has related to Europe, and specifically how it has engaged with the record of German military history, thought, and myth as channeled via the writings, interpretations, and misinterpretations of Carl von Clausewitz and the historical record of the *Wehrmacht* in the mirror of U.S. military doctrine in the 20th century. This thesis seeks to make clear that military thought and doctrine are manifestly an international process of challenge and response. The workings of this dialectical system recommend themselves to such a young person as this author who embark on a career in this undertaking and who, as a rule, need professional preparation to do so. This work is offered with this thought in mind.

To be sure, the influence of the world of ideas on the world in which we live is a difficult thing to identify, explain, and isolate. Paret observes the following with regard to the study of Clausewitz and his influence in which the prescriptive dogma is counterposted to its analytical and dialectically focused opposite, all ensnarled in the cult of "lessons learned":

> The influence of a theorist whose intentions in his major work are not prescriptive is perhaps especially difficult to determine. It is not surprising that the search for Clausewitz's influence, which began in the second half of the nineteenth century, has been confused and inconclusive. That one or two sentences from *On War* have entered common usage, or that some of its arguments have been misinterpreted to support the military fashions of the day, scarcely proves that his ideas have had a genuine impact. On the contrary, if we examine the conduct of war since Clausewitz wrote, we will find little evidence that scholars and governments have made use of his theories. Wars have repeatedly demonstrated the relevance of Clausewitz's theories, but nothing has proved more elusive to discover than the application of "lessons" learned from *On War*.[299]

[299] Paret, "Clausewitz," 211.

The present work has illuminated several enduring themes related to how the doctrine establishment in the U.S. military has engaged with the history of war in Europe, and correspondingly how the record of European war and associated thought, history, and myth has influenced the U.S. military approach to war and strategy. The evidence for this generalization is to be found in documents of fighting doctrine and discourse surrounding Clausewitz and, especially, the *Wehrmacht* as communicated within U.S. military institutions and Western academic and popular historical work in the 20th century amid the epoch of total war.

## A. RESEARCH FINDINGS

First, *Americans very often have looked to the record of European war in order to extract ready-made tactical and operational practices seemingly suited to immediate military challenges*. The U.S. Army, facing a deteriorating political and security situation in Europe in early years of the Cold War, turned to captive German generals for answers, as the defensive mission in Europe seemingly mirrored that experienced by the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front from 1943 onward. Critical scholarship indicates that, while U.S. Army historians and their receptive commanders believed they were gaining valuable "lessons learned" from their captive and cooperative German generals, their captives had their own agenda that very much derived from the domestic political, social, and economic state of postwar Germany and the demobilized *Wehrmacht* officer corps.

These generals transmitted a perspective on the Russian foe that was inherently paradoxical—the individual Russian soldier as essentially subhuman and easily disoriented by the unexpected, the Russian higher command and industrial base clearly capable of conducting large-scale and dynamic operations with highly capable tanks and artillery—and well received by U.S. officers eager to learn how to fight the Soviets. One can appreciate the problems associated with any military thought and doctrine that is founded on the conception of an enemy that cannot innovate and adapt; indeed, this generalization, in the end, did not really apply to the Soviets on the strategic level. U.S. Army planners would transition to the Pentomic Division concept in the mid-1950s, struggle through the

morass of Vietnam and attendant confusion on how to best combat revolutionary war, and return to focus on land warfare in Europe in the mid-1970s.

With the Warsaw Pact build up in the 1970s in mind, the setbacks of Israeli arms against a Soviet style Kursk defense with the new weapons of anti-access and area denial in the 1973 Yom Kippur war catalyzed U.S. Army doctrinal revision and development in the mid-1970s. The newly founded U.S. Army TRADOC (a "lesson" of Vietnam) looked to Germany of the Third Reich and to the Federal Republic of Germany with its *Bundeswehr* for both inspiration on how to best counter Soviet conventional superiority and how to best align with West German strategy that prioritized keeping land warfare as close to the East-West border as possible. TRADOC adopted the "active defense" approach within FM 100–5 in 1976. Real combat never tested this "active defense"; however, the doctrine generated to meet the requirements of European war afforded little perspective on forms of battle and war not immediately tied to the expected clash on NATO's Central Front. Critical voices in the U.S. Army charged that, as it stood, the doctrine neglected the more intangible and moral elements of war that were much on military minds in the uproar of the 1970s, was excessively prescriptive, and rendered forces ill-equipped to manage a Soviet enemy that might ration reserve maneuver elements and avoid positioning the majority of forces within the planned defensive engagement areas as the Israelis had learned to their dismay in October 1973 when they were nearly defeated, as opposed to the operational success won in June 1967.

Second, *U.S. military thought as represented in service doctrine, professional military education curricula material, and reflection on U.S. strategic problems has transferred decontextualized concepts from* On War, *such as the "center of gravity", into military doctrine and defense-intellectual discourse*. The scholar Beyerchen acknowledges the appeal of such approaches: "Practicing soldiers may warm to the idea of focusing one's efforts on the most critical concentration of the enemy's fighting forces in order to strike the most telling blow."[300] This echoes the Jominian precept to "operate a combined effort

[300] Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (1992), 84, https://doi.org/10.2307/2539130.

with a strong mass upon a single point,"[301] and illustrates how the reductionistic and extractive approach toward Clausewitz may lead the reader to draw ill-informed conclusions regarding such concepts as the "center of gravity."

However, as Beyerchen proceeds to argue, Clausewitz qualifies his approach toward the center of gravity with a number of additional circumstances under which the center of gravity might be a city, or "community of interest" amongst wartime partners, or perhaps even popular sentiment or the personality of a leader.[302] Contrary to the interpretation of John Boyd, for example, the "most Newtonian-sounding analogy of a 'center of gravity' becomes swamped in qualifications and caveats intended to convey the complexity of real war."[303]

The thesis does not take issue with inclusion of Clausewitzian terms and phrases within U.S. doctrine and military educational material as it stands. This thesis does, however, posit that the historic and contextual approach, i.e., to have a thorough understanding of the scholarly method and context in the 18th and 19th century, best exemplified within the work of Peter Paret merits much more attention within U.S. military discourse. Paret observes the following with regard to Clausewitz's thoughts and writings:

> Finally, can we penetrate far into his writings without knowing something about the author and his world? The bare structure of his theories stands on its own, but how much is obscured or becomes meaningless when he is read as though he were a late-20th-century defense analyst who chooses to think and express himself in a peculiar manner. In turn, any interpretation of his political and military actions, to say nothing of his personal development, is pointless unless Clausewitz's writings are brought to bear on his life.[304]

Finally, *U.S. military thought should also see such popular writings on doctrine with the school of thought put forth by writers such as Martin van Creveld, John Keegan, J. F. C. Fuller, and Basil Liddell Hart in the rigors of their own time, their own biographies*

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301 Alger, *The Quest for Victory*, 205.

302 Beyerchen, 84.

303 Beyerchen, 84.

304 Paret, Clausewitz and the State, 9.

*(i.e., the British Army in 1918, or the Israeli Army in 1973) and their own place in the history of ideas about war, the character of strategy, the levels of war, and the means of securing victory*. These thinkers, while outside the immediate circle of U.S. military thought as represented within American strategic discourse and U.S. military doctrinal development, are nonetheless important because they are visible contributors to the wider realm of ideas within which U.S. military thought exists. They are persons of merit, but such merit often does not include a real reading of Clausewitz in its detail or an accurate depiction of German military thought, or the impact of German military thought on the wider world. One has always to keep in mind the subjective codex of an author and his or her time, and his or her readership, to include the commercial aspect, which is sizeable in the world of book selling and domination of "discourse".

In this case, a fine example is the 1991 work by Martin Van Creveld. Van Creveld's *The Transformation of War*, for instance, earned a back-cover laudatory review from Marine Corps "maneuverist" advocate Colonel Mike Wyly, and John Keegan's *Face of Battle* and *Mask of Command* retain word-of-mouth recognition amongst officers serious about military history. The author of this thesis read J. F. C. Fuller's *Conduct of War* as part of a discussion group hosted at the Marine Corp's officer training school, and Basil Liddell Hart's iconoclastic stature and from-the-trenches *pathos* vis a vis the "Madhi of Mass" critique surely must echo especially with those officers who have experienced the bad end of a losing strategy and failed policy. No one need apologize for these facts that show the manner in which tactics is often mistaken for strategy and the highly didactic and lessons learned dogma that is at the center of US military education and training.

Nonetheless, this school of thought has woven logical fallacy into the body of Clausewitzian studies in the English-speaking world for reasons of cultural or national bias as well as a school of "lessons learned" and a picking and choosing from the past that may or may not constitute a work of history that can stand scrutiny. This cult of damning Prussian military thought as being somehow an extension of Hitler's world (a topic also examined here) avoids considering the full scope of what Clausewitz wrote on politics, strategy, the observed nature of combat, psychology, and organized violence. Once more, the British experience of total war and German arms in 1914-1918 and 1940-1945 in the

case of such men as Liddell Hart and Keegan's connection of the horrors of industrialized total war to Clausewitzian strategy assumes nearly *ad hominem* proportions as an argument, and disregards the possibility that a Clausewitzian lens of analysis, as applied to the First World War by such fine scholars as Michael Howard and Hew Strachan, might indeed reveal important truths regarding the complex interplay of the nature of war, the mobilization of popular passion and anger, the stalemate on the Western Front, the inherent strength of the defense, and the impact of ill-considered policy on war. Van Creveld's approach selectively extracts portions of Clausewitz's initial argument about the nature of war, policy, and the "first trinity" and essentially builds a straw-man version of the Prussian's thought that casts the "Clausewitzian Universe" as a post-1648 environment bounded by the false dictum that war serves policy and is unconnected with the actual politics of the society in question.

*The Transformation of War* avoids substantive discussion of the true trinity of violence and anger, chance, and politics; doubtlessly because to do so would undermine the thesis that Clausewitzian thought is inapplicable to the world of 1991. Also, the author is guilty of suggesting that the Israeli and Middle East experience of war since, say, 1948 onwards, is the dominant experience of war at all times and place. All the same, the 1991 book appeared exactly at the right moment and right place to find a huge following in the U.S. that as of 1991 became the dominant power in the Middle East and, at the same time, ensnarled for a generation in the warfare native to the place. Just as the German ally in the Cold War shaped U.S. perceptions of war, strategy, operations and so forth, the school of Van Creveld and the primacy of irregular war and the ideal of militarized state and society at war, itself a variant of Ludendorff's First World War vision, has become generalized in part with the aid of Van Creveld's work. His later attitude about gender and society as well as about the profession of arms have surely not improved his reputation as a scholar.[305]

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305 See, for example, Martin Van Creveld, "To Wreck a Military," *Small Wars Journal*, January 28, 2013, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/to-wreck-a-military. See also Martin van Creveld, "The Great Illusion: Women in the Military," *Millennium* 29, no. 2 (2000): 429–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298000290021101.

## B. A CAUTIONARY NOTE ON "MODERN" EUROPEAN WARFARE

Americans have for centuries looked to war in Europe for handy historical lessons, inspiration, and to understand what future battle might look like. As mentioned above, the rise of COIN doctrine in the past generation, if not in the epoch of the 1950s and 1960s, has also figured into this discourse in the recent history of U.S. strategy and war. In this effort, critical approaches have examined the historical record of European counterrevolutionary warfare in cases such as the British and French experience from the 19th century until the end of their empires in the 1960s. Critical scholarship reveals some of Michael Howard's "disagreeable facts" regarding the gap between COIN "as advertised" and the actual record of European militaries. The real story of the fighting in Algeria, Malaya, Africa, elsewhere in Asia, and even South America suggest that the factors that generated perceived strategic or operational victory in these areas were linked to little-acknowledged violent tactics incongruent with the popular image of COIN as the supreme method to wage war.

With the setbacks manifest in the post September 11th campaign clearly evident in 2004-2005 in Iraq, U.S. COIN planners looked to the history of European colonial warfare in order to frame thought about the deteriorating situation in Iraq. The U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps released Field Manual 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*, in 2006.[306] FM 3-24 identified, or perhaps not, the celebrated actions of former times adapted to the 21st century needed to wage successful counterinsurgency: "stability operations", provision of "civil security" and "civil control," the provision of essential services to the populace, support to economic and infrastructure development, and offensive and defensive operations considered more typical to how militaries train, deploy, and fight.[307] FM 3-24 directly cites European counterinsurgency thought, for example the dictum initially posed by French counterinsurgency specialist David Galula regarding population support for an

306 Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, FM 3-24 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, December 2006,) https://permanent.fdlp.gov/lps79762/FM_3-24.pdf.

307 Department of the Army, *Counterinsurgency*, 1–19 to 1–20.

insurgency: "In any situation, whatever the cause, there will be an active minority for the cause, a neutral majority, and an active minority against the cause."[308]

What with some perspective of at best limited political success and much failure, scholarship critical toward the development of FM 3-24 contends that manual and, indeed, U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine more broadly ignore the foundation of European success in foreign colonial wars, such as the British campaign in Malaya. Scholarship contends that the vision of British victory in Malaya in the late 1950s, for instance, obscures the roots that victory had in search-and-destroy operations, patrolling, force-on-force combat and also on displacement of large numbers of the population deemed possibly sympathetic to the insurgents.[309] Close analysis of FM 3-24 reveals the verbatim and near-overlap with previous accounts of European colonial wars and accompanying "lessons learned." FM 3-24, for instance, offers in part a verbatim recycling of Galula's breakdown of population sympathies toward insurgent forces. Moreover, historical scholarship has expounded on the close association that torture and coercion enjoy with historical accounts of European colonial fighting.[310]

In the sign of Russian and Chinese aggression in the year 2021, concepts such as "hybrid warfare" and "conflict in the grey zone" animate U.S. Department of Defense press

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[308] David Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Security International, 2006,) 53, Proquest.

[309] Gian Gentile, *Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace of Counter-Insurgency* 44–47 for details on British army search-and-destroy operations in Malaya; 48–50 for details on the "Briggs Plan" which displaced and resettled hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians deemed to be possible guerilla sympathizers; 58 for the resonance of British victory in Malaya within the U.S. military in relief against the defeat in Vietnam.

[310] Porch, *Counterinsurgency: Exposing the Myths of the New Way of War* 116–117 on British paramilitary violence, reprisals, and coercion in Ireland after the First World War; 130 on large-scale counterinsurgent detention operations in Kenya in 1954; 135 on the incarceration and execution of Arab Revolt insurgents by British forces; 198–200 on French defeat in Algeria as tied to a losing colonial project anchored in minority rule, coercion, and torture; and 274–276 on the counterproductive nature of British Army imperial policing methods in Northern Ireland. See also Alistair Horne's *A Savage War of Peace*, (New York: New York Review Books, 2006,) 204–205 for reflection on the ultimately self-defeating nature of French torture practices during the Algerian War.

releases.[311] Detailed analysis and critique of discourse that frames Russian activity in Europe as "hybrid" and "grey zone" war is beyond the scope of this thesis.[312] However, the research findings of this thesis suggest that those who endorse framing modern war in Europe along these conceptual lines would do well to consider the fact that, historically and as demonstrated in this thesis, U.S. military thought has tended to focus on the nature and means of battle and how to fight at the tactical and operational level and as carried out by the military, to the exclusion of the role of higher political purpose and reason, the scope of war aims, historical context, and the violence, fear, and anger that animates and influences war itself. Clausewitz speaks to these themes and more within his work, and the broader consideration of how the U.S. military mind and the record of war in Europe have interacted surely exercises the judgment of the mind regardless as to how the popular defense-intellectual discourse frames the challenges of the day.

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311 See Jim Garamone, "Military Must Be Ready to Confront Hybrid Threats, Intel Officer Says," U.S. Department of Defense, September 4, 2019, https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1952023/military-must-be-ready-to-confront-hybrid-threats-intelligence-official-says/. See also Jim Garamone, "NATO Moves to Combat Russian Hybrid Warfare," U.S. Department of Defense, September 29th, 2018, https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/1649146/nato-moves-to-combat-russian-hybrid-warfare/.

312 See Donald Stoker and Craig Whiteside, "Blurred Lines: Gray-Zone Conflict and Hybrid War – Two Failures of American Strategic Thinking," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 73 : No. 1 , Article 4, at https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=8092&context=nwc-review for one overview of the origins of the two phrases within U.S. defense discourse and the criticism that said discourse deviates from sound strategic thought. See pages 16–18 for the history of the emergence of the "hybrid warfare" concept within civilian academic and U.S. military discourse, to include several NPS theses, and 7–8 for the history of the introduction of the "gray zone" concept to the defense-intellectual establishment.

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